

A study of self-interest biases of self-initiated expatriates in Dubai, UAE

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requirements of the University of Liverpool for
the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

by

Michael Barry Nates

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Statement of my own work

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Dedication

To all expatriates who find their daily experience to be a parody of the dreams they had when they left home to seek their fortune. I hope this study starts to cast light onto the misunderstood challenges, stresses and unintended consequences of being a self-initiated expatriate and motivates organisations to acknowledge these complexities and in turn provide better support for mutual and sustained benefit.

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I would like to thank my advisors, Dr Jim Hanly and Dr Peter Smith, for their insightful advice, never wavering belief and continual support.

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My dear family, Martine, Ella and Freya; your patience has been my virtue. We can now go for a long picnic.

Key words:

Self-Initiated Expatriate, Self-interest bias, Decision Making, Ethics, Cross Cultural, Moral Disengagement, Cooperative Inquiry

Abstract

This thesis investigated the causes and consequences of self-interest biases of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) working in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). SIEs are professionals who have voluntarily left their home countries seeking employment in a host country in order to further their careers and financial standing while all the while maintaining an intention to ultimately repatriate.

The study aimed to qualify and explore the workplace problem of SIEs in Dubai being materially biased by self-interest. The biases were considered to be a consequence of a range of interacting stressors arising from, inter alia, variability in decision making processes, ethical conflicts, cross and multi-cultural contexts, expatriate expectations and adjustment, the relationship between leaders and followers and, the local labour and residential laws. It was hypothesised that these organisational and social contexts could lead to SIEs having a negative perception of organisation support which in turn predisposed them to ethical malpractices and underperforming decisions. The research aimed to identify practical organisational development interventions that would ameliorate these tensions and so improve the working environment.

A Cooperative Inquiry approach was chosen as the research methodology based on a literature and research review. A learning set of eleven consenting SIEs was established in the researcher's organisation to study the problem in context. The set met six times over a period of 18 months to explore the underlying issues. Time between sessions was used for reflection and implementation of their insights. At the end of the program, all of the participants reported both personal and professional development that they had operationalised.

Data were analysed using a Thematic Analysis approach which delivered a thematic map and a suite of key themes. The data themes and research observations that emerged aligned with and corroborated the literature. The research reached the conclusion that the self-interest biases of SIEs in Dubai was a valid and real organisational problem that is under appreciated and needs to be addressed. Job insecurity and the variability of ethics and ethical leadership in a cross-cultural context were identified as the main contributing factors. Secondary factors were cross cultural dynamics and communications, a SIE's ongoing adaptation & culture shock, and the consequences of weak perceived organisational support.

The main contribution to professional management's knowledge was a process model, Self-Initiated Expatriate Self-Interest Model (SIESIM), that described the interactions and consequences of the stressors faced by SIEs in Dubai. The SIESIM provided a tool to explain how workplace and social pressures progressively predisposed and cumulatively nudged a SIE, as they adjust to and accommodate the local context, towards self-interest biases and thence onward to moral disengagement and biased decision-making. The model provided a readily useable and practical platform for organisations to systematically understand and address the issues as part of a holistic change plan. Finally, based on peer interviews, it appeared that the research findings maybe generalizable to other work contexts and employment categories (including millennials) that have similar stressors and work-life environments.

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Glossary

CI	Cooperative Inquiry
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
LSM	Learning Set Meeting
POS	Perceived Organisational Support
SIE	Self-initiated Expatriate
TA	Thematic Analysis
UAE	United Arab Emirates

1 Introduction

I have lived and worked in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as a self-initiated expat (SIE) for over 12 years. During this period, I developed a deeper understanding and respect for the challenges of working across cultures and in multicultural environments. In parallel, my professional and social networks and I have weathered several cycles of economic boom and recession. The commonly perceived benefits of being an expatriate are the generous employment packages and high standard of living. However, these potential rewards come at the cost of chronic uncertainty of continued employment and residential status and an all-pervading sense of insecurity and vulnerability as one is always a guest in the host country.

Reflecting on the emotional consequences of living in this context led me to consider investigating how these pressures effected a SIE's social and professional behaviours. How we accommodated and adapted to these everyday pressures. Over time, and following discussions with fellow DBA students, tutors and professional peers, the central idea for a study emerged. It appeared that SIEs adapted to the local conditions by, inter alia, developing self-protective behaviours to manage and reduce their exposure to risk and to ameliorate their cognitive dissonance. These behaviours seemed to manifest as self-interest tendencies and biases that (both consciously and unconsciously) took effect during personal and organisational decision-making.

Based on these early thoughts, I decided to develop a cooperative inquiry research study to collaboratively investigate with a group of fellow SIEs, if and how SIEs were prone to self-interest biases during organisational decision-making. I have acknowledged that the research was inspired and influenced by my own experiences and those of the participants and so had elements that are autoethnographic and ethnographic respectively.

The envisaged research deliverable was a model to help explain how SIE's self-interest biases manifested in the workplace. A process model describing the formation of the biases would enable organisations to qualify their workplace and organisational culture's propensity to fostering self-interest biases and how to deploy interventions to reduce those self-interest tendencies.

At the outset, a relatively conventional cooperative inquiry program was developed and initiated. Within the first few months and following the first two learning set meetings, it became apparent that insights and knowledge had emerging that required changes to be made to the research program. As the study progressed, so reflection and emergence as research tool were actively embraced to enable the study to follow and respond to the group's interest, curiosity and experiences.

The thesis has been structured to reflect and honour the underlying story of the emergence of the research process and the participants' experiences. The next section, chapter 2, introduces the concepts of self-initiated expatriates, the socio-economic and legal setting of working in Dubai and how these came together to define the study's problem statement. Chapter 3 provides the frame and context for introducing and justifying the research aims, the chosen methodology of Cooperative Inquiry and its philosophical positioning.

As noted, the original research program evolved in response to the participants' emerging insights and led to several changes and adaptations in the realised research program. The original and the actualised research programs and methods are presented and compared in the fourth chapter. Chapter 5 presents the literature review and has also been shaped to reflect the progressive expansion of the study's scope as new insights arose and the research program integrated these changes. The first part of the chapter presents the initial range of issues, as identified in Figure 2.2, while the second half introduces literature that was researched in response to participants' experiences, questions and thoughts that arose out of the cooperative inquiry program.

Chapter 6 presents and analyses the research data arriving at the five set of themes that were shown to be the primary influences on SIE self-interest biases. The themes have been consolidated and arranged into a cognitive process model. The model, termed the Self-Initiated Expatriate Self-Interest Model, SIESIM, provided a tool to explain how self-interest biases arose as SIEs adjusted to the local contexts and how these normalisation changes interactively became antecedents for moral disengagement. Chapter 6.3 introduces and explains the dynamics of the model and how organisations could use it to identify practical interventions to reduce the nature and scale of SIE self-interest biases.

The model was taken back to the research participants for their review, input and validation. The outcome of this process plus the feedback from the participant organisation and several peer reviews has been presented in Chapter 8. The final three chapters, 9-11, present the research conclusions and recommendations, suggestions for future research and lastly a personal and professional reflection from the author.

2 Self-Initiated Expatriates' self-interest biases as a workplace problem

This chapter examines the concept of being an assigned expatriate compared to a SIE, the legal framework for working and living in Dubai and then brings these together to present the thesis' research problem statement.

2.1 Assigned Expatriates compared to Self-Initiated Expatriates

The term expatriate is colloquially used to describe individuals living and working outside of their national or birth country - i.e. they are foreigners residing in a host country. Expatriates are variously referred to as professional foreign workers or as a trans-national business class taking advantage of economic opportunities and labour markets (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014 and Ewers & Dicce, 2016).

Andresen et al (2014) and Nash (2017) explain the differences between assigned expatriates, self-initiated expatriates (SIE) and migrants based on the formers' motivations to work abroad as a career and lifestyle choice rather than stemming from necessity or dire circumstances. Based on this distinction, migrants are outside of the scope of this study.

Comparing assigned expatriates to SIEs, AEs are sent abroad by a parent company to work in a foreign or host country, remain contracted to the parent company and continue their career in a familiar organisational culture and context. While on assignment, the assigned expatriate maintains and benefits from the support and linkages to their parent company which are not available to SIEs (Showail et al, 2013).

Cerdin & Selmer (2014) identify four characteristics, which when simultaneously met, makes a foreign worker a SIE; namely

- 1) the relocation to an international destination is self-initiated;
- 2) the worker has intentions to be regularly employed (as opposed to be a student);
- 3) the stay is not a permanent move – it is temporary with repatriation expected in the future; and
- 4) the worker is a qualified professional.

Further distinctions between SIEs and AEs are that the former has a greater component of self-initiation and locus of control as they are self-managing their career (Thorn, 2009 and Andresen et al, 2014). Research has identified that SIEs' primary motivations to expatriate are generally based on a desire for excitement, career opportunities, and financial incentives (Thorn, 2009 and Baruch & Forstenlechner, 2017).

The academic descriptions of a SIE echoed my personal experiences and challenges of being a SIE. Reflecting on the differences and consequences of being an AE, New Joiner, Transfer vs SIE led to development of the Boston box construct presented in Figure 2.1. The two dimensions are Organisational Context (vertical axis) and Country and Cultural Context (horizontal axis). The contexts are sub-divided into new and existing, leading to four categories of changes in context when job contexts are combined with changes in country and culture.

Referring to the model, the case of an employee taking a like-for-like job transfer within an organisation and staying in country is positioned in the top left corner. This type of transfer has no new or significant changes in organisation or country cultural contexts as the employee will be familiar with both the organisation and national cultures. In comparison, an In-country New Joiner, will be familiar with the national cultural norms but will need to adjust to their new organisation's policies and cultures which relates to one change of context. Assigned Expatriates (AE), bottom left, have the reverse to the New Joiner, they will be familiar with the organisational dynamics but unfamiliar with the new host country's culture and its culture. The assigned expatriate and New Joiner will each have to learn and negotiate one new context as they adjust into the new role which is more challenging than that experienced by the Job Transfer employee (who has zero new contexts).

		Organisational Context	
		Intra Organisational Transfer within an existing organization Organisational support established and maintained	Inter Organisational Transfer move between organizations Organisational support & trust still to be established
Country and Cultural Context	In-Country Same country, familiar with cultural norms	Job Transfer within an organization in the same country and familiar cultural norms Zero changes	New Joiner new organisation in same country with familiar cultural context One change - organisation
	Expatriate New country and unfamiliar cultural norms	Assigned Expatriate transfer within organisation to new country & cultural context One change – country/culture	Self Initiated Expatriate new organisation, new country with unfamiliar cultural context Two changes – both organisation & country/culture

Figure 2.1: Organisational and Country/Cultural contextual changes for Job Transfer, New Joiners Assigned Expatriates & Self-Initiated Expatriates

In comparison, a SIE traveling to a new job in a new country on their own motivation faces unfamiliarity across both contexts. This type of career move leads to two context changes - from the new organisational plus the new host country's culture. SIEs arriving to a new job in a new country will be unaccustomed to the new organisation's culture, its ethical standards, management practices and decision-making processes. At the time of arrival, everything is new, foreign, untested and not trusted. Their social and work milieus will be unfamiliar and alien as they come to grips with, perhaps for the first time, cross cultural dynamics. The stresses of adjustment across two contexts and not-quite fitting in have a material impact on the SIE's perceptions of organisational support and confidence. In addition, social support networks are often disrupted and ineffective due to dislocation and distance to family and friends.

In conclusion, when a SIE as compared to an AE, arrives at their new role they will be unsure of the expected norms, cultures or behaviours of both the host country and new employer. This context naturally leads to a sense of insecurity, vulnerability and lack of support. This aspect of being a SIE is often ignored or overlooked by organisations who are unaware of the consequences. The heightened sensitivities and perceptions of new SIEs and their ongoing adjustment is a central theme of this study which is revisited and extended in later chapters (section 5.7) .

2.2 SIEs and their context in the Dubai

SIEs in Dubai and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) encounter a specific set of demographic, social, professional and legal environments and constraints. These particular circumstances combine to cumulatively influence and impact their personal lives and careers. This section presents an overview of the national context and regulatory system as a foundation for framing the research.

2.2.1 Socio-demographics of the UAE and Dubai

As at July 2016, the population of the UAE was reported to be 9.2 million with Emiratis, the local host nationals, accounting for 1.4 million and expatriates 7.8 million - expatriates make up 80-85% of the overall population (Guide2Dubai, 2016 and Gulf News, 2016). The breakdown is estimated as Emirati 19%, Arab (other) 23%, South Asian 50%, other expatriates (Asian & Western) 8% (CIA, 2016).

Dubai is the most populous emirate in the UAE with 2.73 million permanent residents as at February 2017 of which 400,000- 450,000 are local Emiratis, i.e. approximately 15% (Dubai Online, 2017). In addition, Dubai's permanent population is increased daily by an influx of 1.1 million commuting non-permanent residents from other emirates and temporary residents, sailors and tourists (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2017). Dubai's professional and white-collar workforce predominantly comes from Westerners (i.e. North American and European, Australasian and South African) plus educated South Asians and non-Gulf Arabs (Davidson, 2014).

An informal hierarchy exists with local Arabs at the top, followed by professional Western expatriates, next come Arabs from other countries and finally Indian subcontinent Asians (Maleki & Ewers, 2007). Keane & McGeehan (2008) note that the hierarchy of social status leads to a hierarchy of salaries with the salaries of Western expatriates exceeding those of Asian expatriates leading to noticeable social distinctions. As part of the local culture dynamics, the local social hierarchy needs to be integrated into a UAE based SIE's personal and professional perspectives and norms.

Davidson (2014) and Abbas et al (1995) note that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) expatriate community are temporary economic migrants who will eventually return home better off than when they arrived. They typically stay for 2 to 5 years during which they do not regard the host country as home nor as a retirement destination. Citizenship is not possible for non-Emiratis. The citizenship rules even exclude foreign nationals who have been long-term intergenerational residents – some for more than 40 years (Hill and Atkinson,

2013). Forstenlechner (2010a) observed that this context created a transitory environment and mind set as it was understood by all expatriates that they will one day need to repatriate.

UAE expatriates appear to accept their status and circumstances in return for employment opportunities. The expatriate communities have become a de facto “loyal silent support base” for the ruling entities as they see an opportunity for self-improvement and economic gain while tacitly accepting the risks.

2.2.2 UAE Labour and Residency Legislation

Labour legislation in the UAE is governed by Federal Law No. 8 (1980) which stipulates that employment contracts are either unlimited or fixed term contracts. Local nationals typically have unlimited contracts while expatriates have renewable fixed term contracts of a maximum two years duration (UAE Labour Law, 2017 and Yaghi & Aljaidi, 2014). Full-time employment entitles an employee to resident status which is revoked at the end of the contract. There is a 30-day grace period from residence visa cancellation to repatriation.

Contract renewal for expatriates needs to be mutually agreed every two years. The period leading up to the renewal date is a time of heightened insecurity as it is not a foregone conclusion that an employer will automatically renew the contract (Vinod, 2016). In my and the research participants’ experience, this biennial cycle is both unsettling and destabilising for SIEs as it leads to months of uncertainty followed by weeks of relief. The rollercoaster of fear and relief impacts the SIE’s adjustment and performance for several months (see section 5.7.1).

Federal Law permits employers and employees the right to terminate employment contracts with the provision that sufficient notice, due process and conformance to defined termination criteria are met. Employers are required to pay for the agreed notice period, with the mandated maximum notice period being three months or until the end of the contract, whichever is shorter.

The Federal Law has provisions for summary termination when either party has materially failed to comply with the terms of the contract. This provision is routinely used by employers who bypassed the disciplinary process and summarily terminate a contract with the foresight that they will have to just pay the statutory maximum compensation of three months’ salary. Under these circumstances, the employee has no recourse, as the employer can be shown to have acted within the law (Kapur, 2016). In addition, unionisation and collective bargaining are not legal in the GCC and there is no protection afforded by trade unions (Jackson, 2013). Keane & McGeehan (2008) observed that the enforcement of labour law is weak and is considered to be biased towards employers.

An unscrupulous employer can therefore choose to cancel an employment contract and instruct the employee to leave work with immediate effect. The employer will be required to pay the notice period salary as working in lieu up to the maximum of three months. The employer also has the right to immediately cancel the residence visa of the employee and his family dependents. Under these unjust circumstances

when employers behave dishonestly due to acrimonious circumstances or excuses of substandard performance, an employee and their family will have one month to either find a new job or leave the country (voluntarily or be deported). Showail et al (2013) note that struggling foreign workers may have their contracts terminated as this is less complicated for the hiring organisation compared to retention and performance improvement.

From the research discussions, it appears that many expatriates are ignorant of the UAE's labour laws when they sign their contracts. Often, they only come to realise the precariousness of their situation several months down the line and so their honeymoon period is often followed by a period of intense insecurity. The potential for summary dismissal plus the threat of non-renewal of a SIE's contract, increases job insecurity and the pressure to perform (Al-Ali, 2008). As such SIEs have little, if any, job security when the organisation's perception of their value or performance drops (see section 0) and they then must face the prospect of being unemployed and sent home.

The legal context of the intertwining of employment and residential status, contracts that can be summarily terminated and must be renewed every two years, results in SIEs living with a continuous sense of anxiety, disempowerment and foreboding.

2.3 Research Problem Statement

A SIE living and working in Dubai is always aware that they are never in full control or on a stable foundation (Ewers & Dicce, 2016). SIEs in Dubai are buffeted by the multiple challenges of local labour laws, residence regulations, stratified demographics, and both foreign and cross-cultural contexts. They are caught between the complex dualities of feeling simultaneously cosmopolitan when living in a big city like Dubai yet isolated from a support network (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2014). Variable ethics standards, weak perceptions of organisational support and cross-cultural dynamics exacerbate the social and work stresses.

SIE's are acutely aware of the importance of maintaining performance standards and so become sensitised to the increased significance of their business decisions and the consequences of these decisions. The gradual and progressive understanding and appreciation of the complex context makes them more susceptible to the influences of the prevailing organisational power structures, politics, organisational behaviours and local legislation (Mechanic, 1962). The power asymmetries could lead SIEs to deliberately and consciously weigh and consider the wider ramifications of their professional decisions to ensure they are seen as performers while limiting unintended personal and career limiting consequences. Under these circumstances psychological safety is reduced which further impairs making effective organisational decisions (Schein, 2010). The interwoven nature of these issues is depicted overleaf as a Venn diagram (Figure 2.2).

The complex research problem is formed in the centre where the issues interact in unpredictable ways with unknown consequences. The effect, it is proposed, is that SIEs' organisational decision making may become biased due to self-interest. This study aims to investigate the causes and consequences of SIE's insecurities and self-interest. How self-interest arises and manifests in the workplace and the effect this has on organisational performance and decision making.

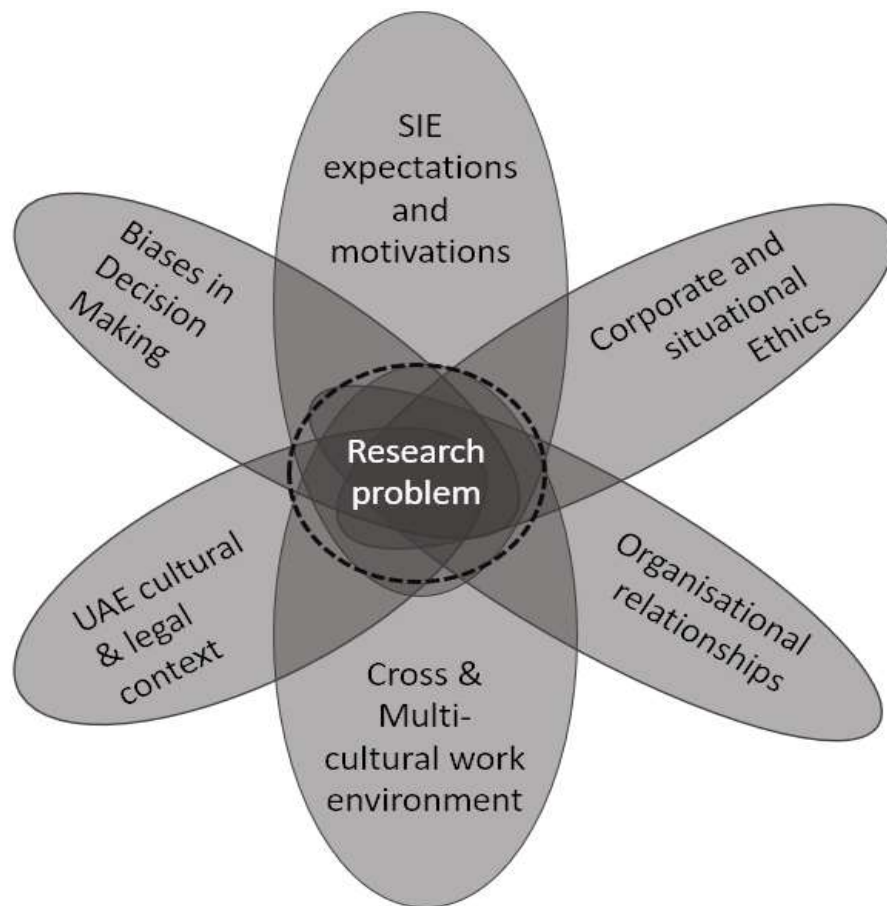


Figure 2.2 Complex interaction of issues faced by SIEs

Rhetorically, why is this a problem? Currently, local organisations appear to be only obliquely and vaguely aware that SIEs are self-interested and behave selfishly. Prima facie anecdotal evidence suggests that management is ignorant of the full extent of the problem and its all-pervading unintended consequences for business effectiveness. A large part of the problem is that SIE self-interest is currently not spoken about, has not been studied and is languishing in an organisational and corporate blind spot – possibly because management professionals don't quite know how to approach this diffuse and amorphous problem.

The next chapter presents an overview to frame and contextualise the study and its research aims. The overall intention being that if organisations can be made aware of the real nature, extent and structure of SIE's self-interest biases then it could be possible to identify and implement measures to contain and minimise SIE self-interest.

3 Framing, Contextualisation and Selection of Research Methodology

This chapter presents the study's aims, objectives and scope as the basis and frame for the deductive top down conceptualisation of the research program. The rationale for using a Cooperative inquiry methodology and the specific choice of Cooperative Inquiry are discussed. This leads onto an examination of the study's philosophical positioning being within Social Constructionism. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the program's research rigor, validity and ethical considerations.

3.1 Aims, Objectives and Scope

This study aimed to explore and better understand the workplace problem of the causes and consequences of self-interest biases experienced by SIEs in Dubai. The research took into account the organisational and ethical dimensions exacerbated by the cross and multi-cultural contexts and legislative framework present during the research period in Dubai. The goal was to shed light on the consequences for both organisations and SIEs and provide tools to support the identification of interventions to reduce self-interest biases and organisational impacts.

The core objective, the actionable knowledge creation deliverable, was to extend the management profession's understanding and develop tools to address SIEs' biases and behaviours. The stretch goal was to identify a practical suite of simple markers or flags for when employees and their work contexts are more likely to lead to integrity and competing tensions. Furthermore, it was hoped to pinpoint interventions that would ameliorate the factors that engender self-interest biases and hence make the workplace more manageable for both employees and their managers.

Accordingly, the research questions were:

- What aspects of SIE's working and social contexts in Dubai create stressors that materially influence and engender insecurity, self-interest biases and unethical behaviour that then could manifest during organisational decision making? and
- Can these aspects be identified and simply explained so that SIEs and organisations can come to appreciate, understand and address this complex problem?

The study focused on SIEs living and working in Dubai. Accordingly, the following groups and contexts were outside of the research scope:

- Non-self-initiated expatriates and organisational sponsored overseas transfers - that is assigned expatriates who have been transferred to Dubai by the organization (as defined in chapter 2);
- Self-employed SIEs working freelance or full-time;
- Employees of multinational corporations, public and governmental organisations as their management and employment conditions are subtly different;
- GCC and host nation personnel as they are not expatriates; and
- Labourers, service industry employees and other expatriates who are not working as professionals,

Furthermore, it was beyond the scope and not the intent of the study to quantify the extent of self-interest, unethical behaviour or moral disengagement nor the quantification of any of the contributing factors that may lead to self-interest and/or moral disengagement.

3.2 Selection of Research Methodology

The initial research proposal was based on the researcher's personal experiences and so the study's point of origination was autoethnographic (Creswell, 2013:73, Easterby-Smith et al, 2012:147). However, the researcher was keenly aware that he had a very limited understanding of what actually influenced SIEs' self-interest biases in the workplace. The problem was intuitively appreciated as being multi-faceted and Gordian, with the nature and extent of its complexity being largely unknown. In addition, due to the lack of pre-existing academic knowledge and understanding (Isakovic and Whitman, 2013), it was recognised that the chosen research approach would also need to enable and support the researcher and participants in progressively delving into and unravelling the problem's internal workings and complexity. Whichever research method was to be chosen was required to strongly support the processes of emergence and reflection without being constrained by the researcher's and participant's lack of understanding or prejudiced by partial and untested preconceived ideas and urban myths.

The University of Liverpool's DBA program requires that the thesis project be a workplace-based management research study using a research approach from within the action research family of modalities. Hence the selection and development of the workplace problem took into account that the topic needed to be suited to a form of action research. Though the focus was on a cooperative research approach, several other qualitative inquiry approaches were also initially considered and for a variety of reasons not taken forward .

Several approaches to data gathering including using defined questionnaires, surveys, structured interviews or case study templates were appraised (Creswell, 2013:157-175, Easterby-Smith et al, 125-242) . Though questionnaires, surveys and structured interviews include open questions, the choice of which questions to include explicitly sets the agenda and has the potential to bias the scope of the discussion (Easterby-Smith et al, 130). The researcher developing the questions is limited to their initial knowledge of the problem, existing literature and their ability to imagine what could be of relevance. Hence questionnaires can be inherently unconsciously biased towards confirming and extending the researcher's initial hypothesis (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010:75). Approaches that use structured data gathering were considered to be too prone to entrain the researcher's pre-conceived ideas and projections of the problem – rather than enabling discovery and engagement with the problem. The use of structured data gathering approaches were deemed to be unsupportive of facilitating the participants' spontaneous reflection and emergence of new thoughts, insights and ideas. Based on these concerns, the use of structured interviews, case studies, surveys and questionnaires were not adopted.

A problem, from a cooperative inquiry perspective, is an issue, concern, opportunity or a task that needs to be addressed in context. The problem is seen as a vehicle for learning which requires one to respond with ideas for action, test these ideas, then to reflect on what has emerged and been learnt (Coghlan & Brannick, 2013:45 and Greenwood & Levin, 2007:5). This research paradigm's distinction, as compared to the scientific method, is that it perceives work-place problems as not being solvable like puzzles, that is there is no single right response. Through engagement and action one can learn to understand and change the problematic situation as "research in action" that generates "practical knowing" (Pedlar, 2008:41; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010:5). This approach enables researchers to study the problem in situ in collaboration with participants who are simultaneously exploring the way they think, act, and relate to a problem. By adopting this approach, a researcher does not need a fully formed and testable pre-existing understanding of the nature of the problem as action learning actively supports emergence and reflection as part the discovery process.

Accordingly, the research adopted an emergent centric cooperative approach to facilitate knowledge creation. The research also retained and acknowledged its autoethnographic roots which have been supplemented and enriched by the research participants' own ethnographic experiences. So, the final result was a cooperative research process with an ethnographic overtone.

3.3 Research Methodologies

Multiple qualitative inquiry and research modalities exist within the action learning and action research family. A selection of the main modalities was assessed for their appropriateness to the workplace problem. The outcome of the analysis is tabulated below.

Table 3.1: Comparison and Analysis of Action Learning and Research Modalities

Modality	Summary description of the modality's key elements	Suitability for investigating SIEs' self-interest biases	Conclusion
Action Learning	Development of employees using actions and tasks as learning medium	Study aims did not specifically include employees' professional or technical development	Inappropriate modality
Action Science	"Research and theory building that is related to social intervention with clients as participants in a process of public reflection that attempts both to comprehend the concrete details of particular cases and to discover and test propositions of a general theory" (Argyris et al, 1985)	The public reflection elements were relevant to this problem but the aim of discovering and testing general theory went beyond the research intents. Furthermore, the reference to "clients" as a third party was considered incorrect in the context as the study was not a client-consultant based intervention but more akin to insider research	Inappropriate modality
Appreciative Inquiry	Building on and appreciating what is working to enable transformation while deemphasising the negative and deficient	At the outset, the status quo was an unknown factor and so a foundation of positive experience on which to build was lacking.	Inappropriate modality

Modality	Summary description of the modality's key elements	Suitability for investigating SIEs' self-interest biases	Conclusion
Clinical Inquiry/ Research	Trained professionals working with clients to draw out understandings of events to enable actions based on reflection and insight	This problem was not a client-clinical professional engagement and the researcher was not a trained psychologist	Inappropriate modality
Participatory Action Research	Extra-organisational focus with free participation by the community focusing on giving voice to disempowered parties and aiming to transform systems and power structures	Problem focus is internal to the organisation and aiming to understand rather than transform power and management structures	Inappropriate modality
Learning History	External consultants support the development of a living document that is part of a change program	The problem did not include a change focus nor was the problem to be researched by hiring external consultants	Inappropriate modality
Collaborative Management Research	Collaboration of an external consultant with an internal manager to understand organisational issues	The scope of the research program did not include the appointment of an external consultant as it was to be an insider led research	Inappropriate modality
Cooperative Inquiry	Collaboration of groups/teams working together in a consensual manner to progressively understand and then dissolve and/or address a problem	The research aim was to progressively explore and understand the effects of self-interest biases of SIEs which was considered to be closely aligned with the sentiments and intentions of Cooperative Inquiry	Appropriate modality

Based on the above, Cooperative Inquiry (CI) was identified as the most appropriate methodology as the approach had, at its core, a focus on groups working together to progressively understand, dissolve and address a problem. The following sections provide a detailed explanation of the CI research process

3.4 Research using Cooperative Inquiry

CI is a researcher-involved constructionist approach that proposes that the best way to learn about an organisation is by trying to effect change and that the best research subjects are those involved in the issues and phenomena (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012:39). CI takes the approach of “research with people, not on or about people” (Heron & Reason, 2001). For these reasons, CI was recognised as the most viable and practical research methodology that was appropriate to investigate SIE's self-interest biases in situ.

CI stands on the assumption and expectation that willing participants agree to, in public, critically examine their own experiences and actions in collaboration with other people who share similar concerns and interests (Reason, 1999). Hence, it enables the researcher and participants to explore and cognise a problem and phenomenon in a non-coercive environment. To support the inquiry process, CI theory and good practices recommended critical subjectivity as a tool to ensure validity. Critical subjectivity is engaged when both the researcher and participants, systematically and analytically reflected on their beliefs and theories to avoid bias and partiality (Reason and Heron, nd).

3.5 Cooperative Inquiry Research Program

The following paragraphs present an overview of a typical CI research program as an introduction to the details of the research program that was actually adopted and realised by this study (which are discussed in chapter 4).

To start a CI research program, the researcher brings together a group of people with a common interest or stake in an issue. The setup steps for a CI program include initiation, establishment of the group, contracting on the study scope and aims, agreeing a research plan, ground rules and roles, and a kick-off meeting (Heron & Reason, 2001). CI studies start with the researcher gaining the participants formal agreement to participate and support the research. The participants form a Learning Set and are invited to attend a kick-off meeting at which the researcher provides an introduction and background to AR, CI and the specifics of the problem to be investigated. During learning set meetings, the researcher acts as facilitator and observer and supports participants in discussing their thoughts, perceptions and experiences of the chosen problem.

CI has an established systematic research process that cycles several times through four distinct phases. The phases are Observe, Reflect, Plan and Act. Each individual and the group as whole, based on their personal and professional observations, were to be encouraged to follow each of these phases during and after each learning set meeting. Participants were requested to reflect on: the problem as a whole and its constituent parts; the recent group discussion and what it meant to them; and how the new knowledge and insights had impacted on their reality. Their observations and reflections were combined and synthesised towards the end of each meeting to generate plans and ideas about what could be changed or challenged about the problem. These ideas and interventions are then taken, by the participants, into their work context to be tested, enacted and deployed as fourth phase of the CI cycle.

After a period of time, the participants regroup and start another learning cycle. Each subsequent cycle starts with observing and reflecting afresh on what has happened and what has changed, been learnt and acted upon. Changes and actioned learning may include alterations in perspectives, attitudes and behaviours within the participants, their groups and teams and at the organisational level.

A CI program usually consists of 6-8 learning cycles during which the research process aims to progressively facilitate the emergence of a deeper and refreshed understanding and appreciation of the problem. In this way the problem may be gradually dissolved as underlying issues are gradually and carefully addressed using the collective learnings of the research group.

CI's hands-on approach of discussing a problem and its issues in a public forum, supported by psychological safety, enables knowledge and understanding to be transformed from the unconscious to the conscious, from the unknown to the known. Knowledge gaps and blind spots can be addressed and filled as the newly generated understanding becomes part of the organization's explicit knowledge which in turn will generate observable and actionable changes (van Krogh et al, 2012).

3.6 Philosophical contextualisation of the study and its methodology

Creswell's (2013:19-37) philosophical categorisation of management research is based on four criteria, viz Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology and Methods & Techniques. This CI study was categorised as qualitative management research that originated from within an ontologically relativistic perspective. The epistemology was social constructivism as the research was seeking to understand the world in which the participants and research lived and worked (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012:25).

Consistent with the ontology and epistemology of social constructivism, the study acknowledged the multiple realities that were constructed by the participants through their own life experiences and interactions in a dynamic social milieu. The study assumed the perspective of co-construction between researcher and participants that shaped each individual's and the group's understanding of their experiences. Axiologically, individual values were honoured as the group negotiated the understanding of their roles and values.

Constructionist based research methodologies, which includes CI, typically aim for convergence from a starting point of questions that inductively analyse data to arrive at an overriding theory to explain the observations (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012:25 and Gill & Johnson, 2012). The authors note that at the core of this form of qualitative research is the need for complex inductive and deductive logic moving back and forth to understand the problem from the inside out and back again. Qualitative research of this kind is based on emergence and enquiry with data collection taking place in a natural setting that is sensitive to people's values and opinions (Creswell, 2013:44). The final outcome of constructionist research is to combine the participants' and researcher's voices and reflections based on their insights and understandings of the complexity of the problem.

In summary, this study's research methodology was placed within the social constructivism remit. The methodology was inductive and assumed that ideas would emerge both individually and from consensus.

3.7 Insider Research and Role Duality

CI makes a distinction between Inside inquiries, which are intra-group and participant focused, and Outside inquiry which focuses on the participants' personal and/or working contexts. This study was an Outside Inquiry as it explored personal and professional experience of a workplace problem.

The author was clearly an "insider" in the research as the learning set participants were drawn from within his own and the participants' organisation. As a researcher in these circumstances, he was not independent and was as a key research instrument (Creswell, 2013:44). As an insider researcher, who undertook second person research, the researcher focused on avoiding conflicts of interest due to the dual role demands of both managing within the organisation and undertaking research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010:120). To mitigate these potential conflicts, the researcher repeatedly discussed and agree the boundaries between the organisational and researcher roles with the participants. The duality of role was further addressed during the recruitment phase and at the start of the first learning set.

Qualitative management studies require the researcher to bracket themselves, using epoché, from influencing the research by creating an “outsider’s lens” (Adler & Adler, 1987; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007, Creswell 2013:80). The researcher needs to balance being deeply interested and open while staying detached to ensure research rigor and accurate recording of data. The approach adopted by the researcher was to consciously keep silent and detached during the learning set discussions. In addition, it was explained to the participants that the researcher was merely there as a facilitator and recorder and not to influence their discussions.

The researcher’s role duality was openly acknowledged so that the participants felt secure and were confident that they were being protected by the strict confidentiality. The open and frank stance supported neutrality, created trust and stimulated free and honest discussions.

3.8 Validity, reliability and generalisability

Fundamental research must establish its validity, reliability and generalisability (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012:71). Validity, for cooperative inquiry, is demonstrated via a sufficient number of perspectives being covered within the study. This was addressed by ensuring that the learning set participants were selected based on their diversity to ensure a broad spectrum of views and perspectives.

Reliability requires the researcher to demonstrate that similar observations would be reached by other researchers. Reliability is difficult to establish in a qualitative management studies due to each context being unique plus each researcher brings their own perspectives as second person researchers. Oates (2002) noted that “exact replication was impossible, since another group would act and reflect in its own way.” As this study was insider-research (see above) that it was dependent on the participants’ trust in the researcher, it may be possible that other researchers with similar relationships to their participants and in comparative circumstances, could obtain commensurable data and outcomes.

Generalisability necessitates that the sample or scope is sufficiently diverse to allow inferences to be extended to other contexts. Though the problem statement was focused, the literature review reflected that similar circumstances could exist for temporary workers and SIEs in other geographical contexts. It appeared that the research findings may be generalisable to other employment contexts and legal situations that mirror those in the UAE. However, this author took a cautious stance regarding expectations of overextension of the generalisability of the research. Other contexts will have distinctions in their labour and residential regulatory frameworks that though similar, but not the same, could lead to material differences in the SIE’s sense of insecurity and self-protection.

By, inter alia, recruiting a diverse set of participants, carefully employing epoché and self-reflection and guardedly reviewing the research conclusions for application to other contexts, this study aimed to be able to demonstrate research and academic validity, reliability and generalisability.

4 Research Programme, Methodology and Emergence

This chapter discusses how the recommended good research practices were actually implemented and operationalised. The first half describes the steps taken to ensure compliance with the University of Liverpool's research ethics and confidentiality requirements and obtaining the participant's informed consent. The second half presents the details of the CI research programme and data collection and analysis as originally conceived and then explains how the realised research evolved and changed in response to the researcher's and participants' ongoing emergence of understanding and insight.

4.1 Research Ethics and Confidentiality

This study adhered to and complied with the University of Liverpool's ethical review and approval process and was granted expedited ethical approval on 11/02/15. The key considerations during ethical approval were to make certain that participants were fully aware of the nature and scope of research, guaranteeing their anonymity, data protection and that participation was voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any time.

These requirements were complied with by providing potential participants with the participation information briefing (Appendix A), and then after a cooling off period, obtaining signed participation consent forms. In parallel, formal consent to undertake the cooperative inquiry project with employees was obtained from the researcher's organisation.

Data confidentiality was ensured, as per the ethical review requirements, by the deliberate omission of participant's names in learning set discussion notes and their anonymization in research notes and transcripts. Research information was stored in a secured cabinet and computer data protected with a password. The participants' organisation understood, as part of its consent, that it would not have access to research information or data.

4.2 Selection and consent of participants

For any cooperative inquiry to be successful, the researcher must gain access to a group of willing participants and then build rapport in a safe environment. In consultation with the researcher's organisation, it was agreed that one learning set would be established comprising a cross section of 8-10 professional SIEs. The selection criteria, to ensure diversity and reliability, were set as follows:

- Self-initiated expatriate professionals living and working in Dubai, UAE
- Working for the researcher's organisation
- Managerial or professional role with decision making responsibilities
- More than 12 months expatriate experience
- Out of their probationary period
- Able to commit to attending six learning set meetings
- English language fluency

In addition, the following exclusion criteria were established:

- No management relationships to each other and/or the researcher to avoid conflicts of interest.
- Non-SIEs, including host country nationals and/or expatriates who have relocated from one of the organisation's regional offices to the Dubai office are ineligible.
- Converse of the inclusion criteria

Following confirmation of ethical approval in mid-2015, the study was started with establishment of the learning set. Invitations were extended by personal approach to potential participants during which their research aims and structure of the study were explained and discussed. Participant were provided with a copy of the Participant Information Brief (Appendix A) and it is emphasised that participation was voluntary. Those that agreed to participate confirmed their involvement by signing consent forms.

The research participants were confirmed towards the end of 2015 and the learning set comprising 11 professional colleagues who all met the participant criteria. The participants' biographical and academic details have been anonymised and are presented in Appendix C along with the researcher's own data.

The participants covered a broad range of cultural, professional and academic backgrounds that provided the breadth and depth of discussion to understand and explore the workplace problem. The group included married and unmarried individuals with varying number of dependents both in and outside of Dubai. All were SIEs with >2-years' experience as an expatriate with several participants having lived in multiple countries. None of the participants had a managerial- subordinate relationship.

4.3 Data collection and storage

Creswell (2013:148-149) provides guidance on data collection for CI that can be summarised as:

1. identify a group of individuals who have common experiences of the problem in question;
2. conduct group discussions and interviews that are transcribed into notes, while;
3. the researcher brackets their own experiences during the data gathering process.

Data collection was designed to be qualitative with raw data being gathered by transcribing the discussions and narratives from the LSMs, follow up interviews and the researcher's personal reflections. Notes were taken by hand then transferred into electronic records using voice to text recognition software. Participants were informed that all handwritten notes were anonymised at the time of writing, i.e.- the notes excluded records of who said what. Video and voice recording were considered unsuitable and precluded due to the small, but possible, risk that participants could be identified plus the concern that the recording of meetings would have an impact on trust and openness.

Data security was ensured by storing all hard copies of notes and records under lock and key in the researcher's private study. All electronic records were password protected on a laptop with secure backups equally being password protected as per University protocols.

4.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in Cooperative Inquiry (CI) research aims to extract a distilled understanding of what happened and how the problem was experienced by the participants so that the researcher can uncover and present the essence of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013: 190-191). Thematic analysis (TA) is a deductive, unbounded process that uses an open approach to support the emergence of new ideas and patterns and so is aligned with the CI approach. Accordingly, TA was chosen as the data analysis methodology as it has been demonstrated to support pattern recognition by “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, the authors noted that TA is particularly suited to studies that lack pre-existing research or academic knowledge, which is specifically relevant to this study.

TA is an organic (rather than mechanistic or computer-based) data coding method for theme development that relies on the researcher’s active role. Data collection is done by recording and transcribing group discussion notes. Transcriptions are analysed to identify significant statements that are gathered into clusters of meaning called themes. The uncovered emergent themes provide a framework for the researcher to organize and reflect on the data analysis.

The aim of TA is not to simply summarize the data, but rather to identify and interpret the key features of the data by using the research question as a guiding searchlight. Data are analysed from the perspective of understanding each individual’s and the groups’ “what and how” (textual and structural) experiences of the underlying issues. TA’s advantage is that it strictly maintains the data’s context, i.e. data analysis is undertaken in the context of the discussion, which typically facilitates unanticipated insights coming to light during the analysis process. (Fereday et al, 2006, Vaismoradi et al, 2013 and Clarke & Braun, 2017).

The goal of a TA write-up is to ensure that the complicated story contained in the research data is communicated in such a way that the study’s merit and validity is recognised. The TA should be clearly grounded in the data, but also go beyond superficial face value by explaining the deeper meanings and implications for management professionals. In this way, the TA provides a means to create a gestalt response from raw data that enables a holistic interpretation of the research results that includes the internal workings and the external consequences of the problem.

Braun & Clarke (2006) provided a structure and guidance for undertaking TA. The process included several iterative and recursive phases, the first of which was coding of textual data. Data texts are reviewed to identify key words, called codes, in their context. Computer software, such as Nvivo, is commonly used to analyse textual data using an inbuilt coding methodology. Computer based coding has been recommended for textual data that are lengthy, unstructured, simple and or lack implicit meaning. Complex textual data with implicit, embedded, ironic, sarcastic or contextual meanings are not generally suited or recommend for computer-based analysis and coding. The software counts words and forms linkage patterns but is unable to extract the meaning of implicit or ironic statements. Ktari (2010) noted that manual text coding was more

reliable and valid for textual data that is highly implicit, ironic or contextual which mirrors this study's data set.

TA recommended that texts are analysed and coded manually. The researcher is required to critically and reflectively analyse the textual data and, relying on their insider-knowledge, identify in context the reoccurrences of key words and phrases. Complex statements or phrases that include sarcasm or colloquial slang are categorised and coded according to both their explicit and implicit-contextual meaning. In this way, manual coding enables the identification of important words within discussion structures. The next step is to recognise broad clusters within the codes which are groups into sets of similar codes, statements and material observations. The initial clusters are again reviewed and interpreted with regard to how they relate to the research question with extraneous clusters being set aside.

The second phase of TA is to identify themes within the coded words and clusters. Braun & Clarke (2006) recommended using visual representations including tables, mind-maps, small cards and/or separate pages for recoding the early themes. The long list of themes is refined down until the data and themes start to coalesce into an overall narrative. At this stage, it was recommended that the researcher rechecks to ensure that the themes are individually coherent, distinct and do not overlap. It was cautioned against moving linearly from one phase to the next as the TA process requires frequent reviews and revisions. The final step involves refining and defining the remaining themes down into their essences. Each theme should be supported by a detailed analysis that describes its scope, function and role in the overall story.

Busch et al (2005) suggested using cognitive mapping to develop an interconnected diagram to provide context and relational meaning to the themes. A thematic map supports data analysis by assisting with the review of the themes to make certain of their coherence into a workable framework of meaning (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic map may be considered to be working when a story emerges that provides a narrative about the data in relation to the research question.

4.5 Original Research program

Good practice suggested that a CI program should include at least six learning cycles and so a schedule was established for six learning set meetings (LSM). The original plan was that each LSM would provide the participants with the current knowledge and theories on one or two aspects of the overall workplace problem. The intention was that the participants would be invited individually and collectively to observe and reflect on their actual experiences as compared to the academic research. The ensuing deep discussions aimed to facilitate the surfacing a shared understanding of the problem and an alignment on how to take their reflections and realisations back into the work context.

The structure and format of the LSMs was based on Pedlar's (2008:32-33) guidance regarding setting ground rules, supporting people to enable them to develop an understanding of the situation and enabling participants to present their views and ideas in a safe environment. A standing agenda was agreed to support

the LSMs. The agenda included restating the ground rules and re-emphasising confidentiality. The second part covered a check in and review of their reflections, actions and development since the previous LSM. After a short break, the meeting moved onto a short presentation of a new theme or theory relating to an aspect of the workplace problem. This was followed by a group discussion to draw out their thoughts, insights, perspectives and reflections on the existing knowledge and how it married, or not, with their experiences as a SIE in Dubai. Participants were encouraged to question both the problem context and their own views/self-perceptions while being supported by the group and researcher as a whole. The standing agenda and LSM structure, paired with Isaac's (1993) "deep dialogue" and psychological safety (Schien, 201) was designed to enable participants to freely and openly engage and respond with their true and unvarnished personal experiences. To ensure that reflection and actionable learning took place between sessions, each session was ended with a reminder to reflect on what had been covered in the meeting with a view to feeding back to the group at the start of the following meeting.

The original plan was that over the duration of the full program, each session would progressively provide the participants with more information to enable their deeper understanding and discovery of the underlying issues as illustrated in Figure 2.2 - Complex interaction of issues faced by SIEs - on page 8. Table 4.1 presents a summary of the original plan for the six LSMs. The full details of the study scope (including topics and indicative questions) was provided to the participants as part of the recruitment process (please see Appendix B).

Table 4.1: Planned Learning Set Meetings and Topics

Focus	Discussion topics
LSM1: Cooperative inquiry & Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research aims and objectives • Cooperative Inquiry, Learning sets and Rules of Engagement • Decision making in organisations • Individual and group challenges/conflicts that arise during decision making • Typical/day-to-day decisions made by participants • When is a decision a rote and when does a decision include contemplation
LSM2: Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics, absolute & relative ethicality, corporate and individual ethics • Ethics management systems in organisations – policies, training, monitoring • Ethical challenges/conflicts during decision making
LSM3: Cross-cultural contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National cultures - models and typologies • Cultural differences as related to Middle Eastern organisations • Examination of expatriates as insiders or outsiders in their groups and organisation • Effects of cultural differences on power and authority relationships for individuals and groups
LSM4: Tensions for SIEs during decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-interest, self-preservation and perspectives on consequence • Influence of organisational and leader support during decision making. • Conflicts/tensions and consequences for expatriates in organisations and how these affects decision making

Focus	Discussion topics
LSM5: Effective organisational decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational decision making –how to identify, avoid and reduce conflicts and tensions • Reflection on relevance of these topics to participants’ work contexts.
LSM6: SIEs and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis of previous topics into overall model of causes and consequences. • Discussion of any ongoing follow-ups if desired or required

The envisaged plan was for the six meetings to be run over a 3 to 6-month period with the typical gap between sessions being 3 to 4 weeks. It was recognised from the outset that one of the key challenges would be ensuring availability of all participants due to high levels of business travel. A fall-back position was established that when a quorum of participants was available, then the learning set would be run to maintain momentum. Those that missed the session would have one-to-one or smaller group discussions to fill in the gaps and keep up to date.

This was the original blueprint that was designed to ensure that LSMs were structured as a formal CI process that would take place over several months. Each session intended to ladder the participants down into the core of the problem to gradually untangle its complexity (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012:129 and 133).

4.6 Actualised Research Program based on ongoing Emergence and Reflections

The first LSM took place in January 2016 and the overall research program took 17 months concluding in early June 2017. This was significantly longer than the anticipated 3 to 6 months. The delay and extension of the data gathering phase was due to the repeated inability to schedule LSMs for mutually convenient timings due to participants and the researcher’s business travel commitments. LSMs were repeatedly cancelled and rescheduled and some LSMs were delivered more than once to accommodate those who missed the first opportunity. In addition, one-on-one sessions were held with those participants who had missed the group sessions. Overall 8 of 11 participants attended all discussions, 2 missed one session and 1 participant missing two sessions. The overall attendance at LSMs and catch up interviews was 92% percent.

The learning set program was initially rolled out as per the research plan with the first three LSMs following the planned topics (as per Table 4.1). The early discussions and interactions were comparatively stilted due to an initial lack of trust and psychological safety. The participants also came to realise that they had never really reflected on or actively considered how being a SIE may have affected their decision-making processes or ethical considerations. They noted that, with hindsight, these were aspects of their roles and contexts that they had either taken for granted or unconsciously overlooked. Their involvement in the research had aroused their interest and curiosity which is a core aim of cooperative inquiry.

During the second and subsequent LSMs, the group’s trust was established and grew so that, in conjunction with their active personal engagement and interest, the discussions and reflections deepened leading to greater insights and emergence of new ideas. By way of example, during the second LSM it was noted in

passing that some SIEs appeared to become more immoral overtime as they adjusted and changed their ethical compasses. During the transcription of the meeting notes and reflection on the discussion, it became apparent that the dimension of moral behaviour and how it is activated had been omitted from the original list of issues faced by SIEs. To fill the gaps, further academic research was undertaken which led to the recognition that expatriate adjustment (Pires et al, 2006) and moral disengagement (Bandura et al, 1996) could be key elements in the process of how SIEs make self-interested decisions. The LSM program was then revised to include expatriate adjustment and moral disengagement as topics in the 4th and 5th meetings.

A similar process of deepened awareness and changes to the program took place relating to the Perceived Organisational Support and Job Insecurity. During the third meeting in response to cross cultural issues, participants obliquely referred to organisational support and how it affects perceptions of job insecurity. Neither of these concepts has explicitly been part of the original literature and following further research were included into LSMs 4 and 5 respectively.

Table 4.2, contained on the next three pages, presents a comparison of the planned original research program versus the realised program. The table also includes details of the reflections and themes that emerged from each LSM and how these were translated into actions and learnings. In effect, the table is an overall summary of the actualised program combined, chronologically, with the research findings and actions that arose from each action learning cycle.

The final LSM also led to the recognition that additional review sessions were needed to assure the validity and reliability of the research's proposed findings and conclusions. Five supplementary stakeholder and peer review meetings were arranged. The first was a workshop with the participant organisation's HR team to feedback the research findings and present the model for their professional critique. Two reviews were undertaken with long term local professional SIEs to gauge their insights on the utility and accuracy of the research. Two further discussion were held with management professionals who were not SIEs to gather their unbiased (as a SIE) perspective and fresh opinions as external third parties. The outcomes of these sessions are presented in Chapter 8.

In parallel with the changes implemented to the research program after the third learning set meeting, so the scope of the literature review and the overall structure of the thesis was also amended to reflect and tell the story of the influence of cooperative inquiry and emergence. The original framework and expanded scope of the literature review are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

Table 4.2: Realised Learning Set Meetings, Organisational and Peer Reviews with Actionable Outcomes

Session	Planned Scope	Realised Scope	Reflections and emergent themes	Realised and Future Actions
Learning Set Meeting 1	Cooperative Inquiry and Decision Making	Cooperative Inquiry and Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision making processes (conscious and unconscious) were not widely appreciated Early indications that CI is an appropriate research methodology for the workplace problem Group trust and cohesion was gradually becoming established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants became sensitised, some for the first time, to unconscious biases inherent in their decision making Continue with CI process Focus on establishing trust, psychological safety and a team spirit
Learning Set Meeting 2	Ethics	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethics, and the associated concepts, were not generally understood or routinely actively considered Participants from the legal profession were the exception which indicates the importance of professional codes in establishing ethical standards SIEs faced ethical challenges arising from cross cultural, organisational and regional contexts Lack of ethical training and leadership led to increased uncertainty and aided moral breakdown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognised that situational and group ethics were of importance and would be a recurrent research theme as a driver for self-interest Need to allow more space in future sessions to enable discussions relating to previous themes, to circle back and re-emerge. This would support integration and contextualised. Participants' moral compasses were revitalised by the meeting as they had become more aware of the workplace ethical dilemmas they were facing but had previously overlooked or ignored Need to extend the literature review to include expatriate adjustment and moral disengagement and add these topics as themes in future LSMs
Learning Set Meeting 3	Cross-cultural contexts	Cross-cultural contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants were, almost completely, unaware of cross-cultural theory and models. Cross cultural dynamics and barriers are a key enabler and catalyst for SIE insecurity and self-protection behaviour Even a short cross-cultural awareness seminar was able to provide some basic tools to assist in navigating the multi-cultural contexts faced by SIEs Cross cultural issues appeared to interact, influence and amplify all of the other SIE issues. Cross cultural miscommunication blocked formation of organisational trust and increased job insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of cross-cultural awareness and competence was deeply intertwined with all of the issues faced by SIEs. The knowledge gap was, and can be in the future, readily bridged with even short introductory cross-cultural awareness seminars and training Participants observed that they would take their new explicit cross-cultural awareness into their workplace for testing and validation as an actionable learning. The effects of cross-cultural contexts appeared to be a significant theme and so could reoccur as a contributing factor in future discussions and the model Perceived Organisational Support and Job (in)Security were recognised as gaps in the original problem scoping. They were added to literature review and rolled into the LSM program

Session	Planned Scope	Realised Scope	Reflections and emergent themes	Realised and Future Actions
Learning Set Meeting 4	Tensions for SIEs during decision making	Expatriate adjustment and Perceived Organisational Support (POS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIE adjustment was acutely experienced by all participants as an ongoing issue. • Each participant had thought, prior to the session, that they (and their network) were alone in experiencing and enduring these stresses • Awareness of the expatriate adjustment process as a universal challenge, appeared to support quicker adjustment and helped to reduce the SIE's sense of isolation • The effects and importance of POS and procedural justice were misunderstood and under appreciated by leaders and managers. POS appeared to be sitting in a blind spot • The development of POS and leader-follower relationships materially affected a SIE's sense of security and belonging • Cross-cultural barriers between leaders and followers enabled the development of negative POS with consequently reduced commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIE's ongoing adjustment over an extended period, and never actually coming to an end, was a contributing stress that was seen as factor contributing to SIE insecurity • Participants awareness of the SIE adjustment process led to a significant reduction in their stress levels due a change in their perceptions of not being an isolated case • The awareness of the adjustment process led to improved sense of belonging and adjustment • Organisations could reduce adjustment related stresses by actively supporting SIEs through their first 6 months as part of an ongoing extended on boarding process • Effective organisational procedural justice processes were a prerequisite for SIEs to develop trust and POS in their organisation • POS and the effect of leader-follower relations in cross-cultural contexts was not adequately appreciated and should be incorporated into management training programs • Participants planned, as an actionable learning, to share their new knowledge of the SIE adjustment process with family and friends to aid their adjustment and sense of not-being-the-only-one facing these issues
Learning Set Meeting 5	Effective decision-making avoiding biases	Moral dis-engagement and SIE job insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral disengagement was present in corporate contexts and was intuitively appreciated but often tacitly ignored • Exposure to the moral disengagement model reset the SIE's moral compass by explicitly labelling and defining immoral behaviour • Job-insecurity was seen as an all-pervading fear and stress experienced by all SIEs in Dubai • Job and general sense of insecurity was intensified by local labour laws and practices. The linkage between employment contracts and residential status being renewed every 2-years was significant • Chronic job-insecurity stresses were gradually feeding into emotional fatigue which, in turn, led to a greater propensity for moral disengagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' new awareness of the mechanisms of moral disengagement empowered them to recognise when they and others were tending to immoral behaviour and biased decision making. • In turn, this enabled them to be consciously aware of their own ethical standards and when they may need to provide ethical leadership • Job-security can be partially reduced by organisations being transparent during the recruitment phase so SIEs are aware of the status quo. Transparency would also support their adjustment • Organisations needed to implement programs that actively supported the development of positive POS & leader-follower relations as a mitigating factor that reduced job insecurity • SIEs' chronic fatigue and low-grade stress could be addressed by organisations implementing wellness programs, work-life balance and active stress management.

Session	Planned Scope	Realised Scope	Reflections and emergent themes	Realised and Future Actions
Learning Set Meeting 6	SIEs and decision making	Look back at research problem and its issues, review of model, reflection on learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants identified their main drivers for self-interest biases The cognitive thematic analysis map, the conceptualised model (presented below), was validated as representative of the participants' experiences as SIEs in Dubai Participants reasserted that self-interest biases of SIEs was a valid organisational problem that needed to be discussed and addressed Participants shared their professional and personal growth and actioned learnings that had come out of their involvement in the study The CI process had supported the group in coming to new understandings of the problem and had provided insights into how to address the underlying issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The model, as presented, adequately conceptualised and described the main causes and consequences of SIE self-interest biases The research findings and recommendations needed to be shared with the participants' organisation for review, action and implementation The model needed to be peer reviewed, by professionals who have not been part of the LS, to challenge its validity and reliability Once validated, the model should be shared with the management profession as part of the knowledge dissemination plan. Paths could include one-to-one sessions, conferences and possibly a paper in a professional journal
Participant Organization Feedback		Review of findings and develop action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisation's HR team agreed with and accepted the research findings. They validated, in their professional opinions, the model's scope and structure The HR team recognised the need to improve the existing organisational context as the factors were negatively impacting on their SIE's stress such that negative, rather than positive, POS was being established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants' organisation's HR team stated that they would develop and implement an on-boarding program for new joiners and SIEs that would explicitly include information on SIE adjustment, local legislation, ethics and cross-cultural awareness. The HR team acknowledged the need to champion the development of line management training as means to positively influence followers' POS. Cross-cultural competency was to be a key element
Peer Reviews		Peer Review of findings and reflection on validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experienced local professional peers and government officials had similar knowledge gaps to those of the participants The reviewers identified with and supported the model and noted its usefulness as a tool to explain how SIE biases arise and propagate. There was broad agreement on the research findings and recommendations The need was recognised to share the findings and model with a wider audience to start a wider discussion on the issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research findings and model could be shared with management professionals as a start to pilot study and to wider dissemination Future presentations to be refined to the focused needs of practicing management professionals with an emphasis on how to prevent SIE biases leading to negative corporate consequences A follow up meeting was to be set up with representatives of the Dubai government to further share the findings with the broader team and discuss how they can be addressed by the UAE's Reglabs initiative

5 Literature review

5.1 Academic Context

Over the past 20 years, published papers and research into issues affecting expatriates has steadily increased. However, at the time of starting this research, the investigation of expatriates' performance and behaviour was a comparatively niche topic with just three journals accounting for nearly 50% of all papers published relating to expatriates and expatriation (Dabic et al, 2015). The majority of research was from the perspective of human resource professionals working for multinational corporations. The research aims were primarily directed at understanding how expatriates could boost organisational performance and how to optimise HR management processes to ensure integration, retention and successful repatriation of expatriates. Of the 438 papers reviewed as part of the scoping phase, none focused on expatriate ethics or decision-making as key topics with only 104 (24%) taking account of culture or culture issues.

Narrowing down to this study's specific organisational context of SIEs, led to 80-90 broadly relevant academic papers that had been published in the past 12 years. Of these, only five addressed cross-cultural issues and three focused on the human resource management factors that effected SIEs. None addressed organisational decision making or ethics. Four studies were situated in the UAE and two in Qatar, though none of those were directly relevant to the focus of this thesis. It was apparent from this macro review of the existing research that there were no directly similar studies to the proposed research.

5.2 Structure and scope

At the outset of the research program, the literature review included the topics as depicted in the original flower-like Venn diagram of intersecting issues (see Figure 2.2). These included: biases in organisational decision-making; SIE motivations and expectations; corporate and situational ethics; organisational relationship; cross and multi-cultural work environments; and the UAE cultural and legal context. The diagram below illustrates the sequential changes made to the scope of the literature review in response to the insights that emerged out of the learning set meetings.

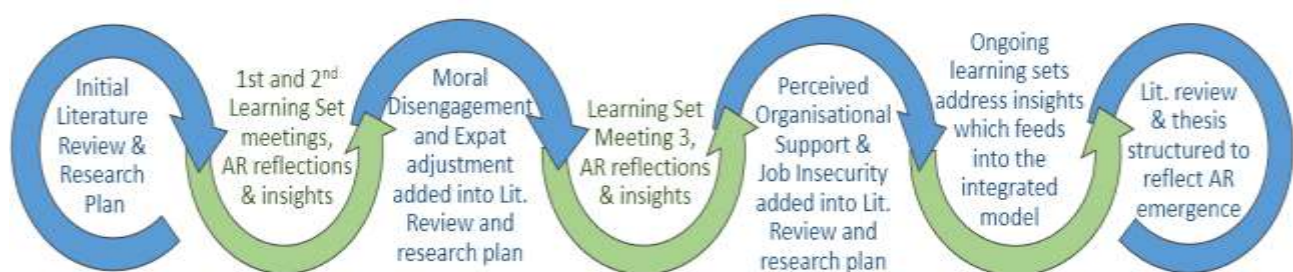


Figure 5.1 Evolution of the literature review and thesis in response to the CI learning cycles

The scope of the finalised literature review was expanded to also cover; moral disengagement; perceptions of organisational support and leader-follower relationships; and job insecurity as illustrated in Figure 5.2

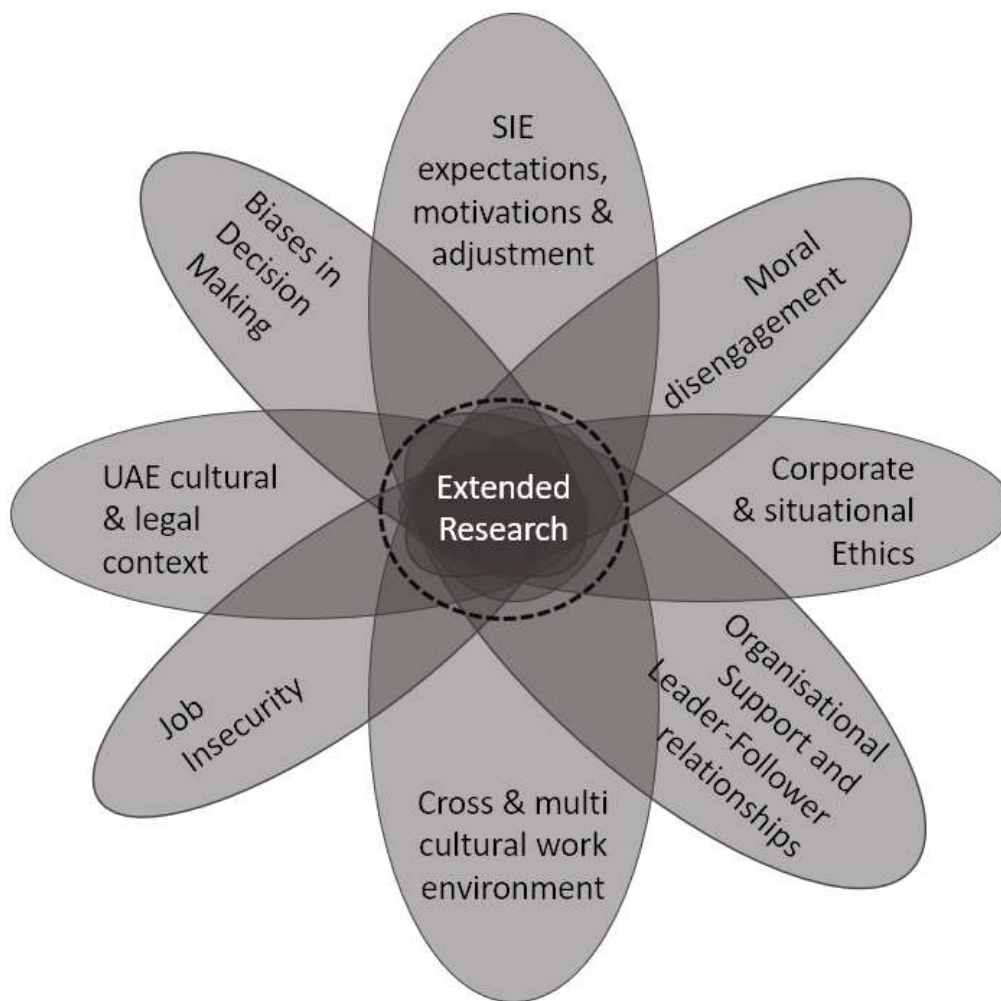


Figure 5.2 Literature Review scope as amended

The framework and flow of the literature review aims to mirror the chronological growth and development of the overall research program. The literature review structure starts with a review and discussion of the original issues considered to potentially have an influence on SIE's self-interest biases. The second part addresses the additional issues that were progressively added. The intention is that the flow of the literature review will support the overall research narrative and the path followed by the researcher and participants. The literature review concludes with a synthesis of the key themes and insights that informed the learning set discussions, data analysis and the eventual development of the self-interest model.

5.3 Organisational Decision Making and Self-interest biases

Deciding and decision making relates to choosing an action or outcome from amongst several alternatives. Decision making literature has a well-established body of knowledge for explaining both good practices for effective outcomes and conditions that lead to less favourable results. The causes that lead individuals and groups into illusions of control, judgement traps, biases, groupthink, escalation, entrapment, social pressures and ultimately being "predictable irrationality" have been studied for more than 40 years (Janis, 1973, Rubin & Brockner, 1975; Staw & Ross, 1987; Hammond et al, 1998; Drummond, 2001; Bazerman & Moore, 2008 and Ariely, 2010).

Decisions typically blend and balance three rationalization processes, namely; problem-solving, interest-accommodation and power & control. Within this context, decision makers are “actors among many other actors” operating within and affected by the realities and constraints of political and social contexts (Laroche, 1995). In parallel, agency theory asserts that all decisions are inherently rational and self-interested as an agent is expected to maximise both their own and the organisation’s returns on behalf of their principal - the organisation (Haynes et al, 2015). So, decision makers aim to act in the organisation’s best interests while balancing contextual constraints and self-interest.

Carson (2004) noted that conflicts of interest and interests that conflict are distinct - the former includes a conflict between one’s duties to another party and the advancement of one’s own interests. In contrast, someone who wishes to pursue a balance between work and social life has conflicting interests or competing commitments (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). SIEs self-interest biases fall into the former category of conflict of interest.

Moore et al (2010) concluded that judgements are materially influenced where there is a relationship between the persons and the outcomes even when there are clear incentives for rationality. When a conflict of interest was present (based on relationships), research subjects stood by and believed their biased assessments as being unbiased and were unable to remove the influences of self-interest. It appeared that once compromised, a subject is unlikely to be able to remove their inherent biases. The authors reflected on the low efficacy of implementing strict corporate guidelines and penalties for corruption as these do not always work when relationships are at play.

Self-interest biases are motivational biases, rather than cognitive, as they are influenced by the desirability of outcomes (Montibeller & von Winterfeld, 2015). Darke & Chaiken (2005) demonstrated a positive relationship between immediate personal consequences and an increase in self-interest biases. Self-interest has been shown to be underscored by lying when one perceives a beneficial outcome (Grover & Hui, 1994) and is exacerbated by uncertainty (Johns, 1999).

Self-interest manifests as the “want” self which is typically silent during the initial stages of a decision, only emerging to dominate at the moment of decision (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011). This leads to the self-enhancing process of self-interest often being unconscious and automatic with “self-interest [being] at the root of unethical behaviour” as a motivator.

Self-interest has also been categorised as a defensive bias that arises to protect the decision maker from unforeseen self harm. Tabatabaieian et al (2016) concluded that lying under the influence of self-interest is an automatic tendency that is a quicker reaction than avoiding lying - in self-serving circumstances dishonest decisions are preceded by less hesitation and are taken quicker.

Research has demonstrated that people biased by self-interest for gain are more likely to lie by omission than actively lying - lies of commission (Pittarello et al, 2016). There is a distinction between passive and active

transgressions with studies concluding that passive omission biases are considered less immoral than active offences. Mackinger and Jonas (2017) demonstrated that the unconscious tendency to self-interest increased with the person's increasing accountability.

Bounded awareness is the creation of boundaries around a problem to systematically justify the exclusion of relevant information when undertaking a decision. Similarly, "bounded ethicality" is the exclusion of salient issues relating to morality that favour self-interest (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011). One's emotional state further influences the perception and reaction to environmental circumstances which in turn affects judgements and decision-making (LeBlanc et al, 2015 and Hu et al, 2015). Finally, Kahneman et al (2011) note that once biased, the de-biasing of one's own perceptions is very difficult.

5.4 Ethics and decision making

Ethics and ethical considerations are implicitly embedded within decision making and self-interest. This section extends the review by introducing ethics, ethicality and ethics in business and decision making.

5.4.1 Ethics – Absolute, Relative, Individual or Situational

According to moral absolutism, there is a single moral law that applies to everyone derived from the common human need for long-term survival (Badaracco, 1992). Ethical absolutism or universalism, states that an omni-present set of standards should apply and be equally valid in all places and times. Absolutism directs that behaviour should be evaluated by the same rules regardless of action or consequences.

In contrast, ethical relativity accepts that ethical and moral standards differ between groups, within a single culture, and between cultures. Individual ethical relativism, a subset of the relative perspective, asserts that each person possesses the standards by which their actions are judged. Individual ethical relativism is based on the notion that ethical decisions are deeply personal, subjective and highly complex. (McDonald, 2010). Cultural relativism, another subset of ethical relativity, claims that morality is relative to a particular culture, society or community and there is no one standard for judging the morality of individuals, groups or cultures.

Situational relativity or situational ethics is distinct from ethical relativity and asserts that there are no universal moral standards. An individual assesses a decision based on their specific situation using rules derived from the individual's roles and/or social groups. What is judged to be a correct moral action is based on the group's standards - even though these standards may differ across groups. This scenario leads to a potential divergence between personal and professional moral standards. According to the relativist view, the individual has a responsibility to the moral standards associated with their role or group and not their personal emotions or conscience. From this perspective, rightness and wrongness are meaningless notions if they are isolated from a specific context. So, though moral standards may have commonality, adherence and practice differs across and within roles and groups which creates challenges for SIEs in multi-cultural contexts.

Individuals typically overestimate their ethicality to make their own immoral behaviour is favourably skewed when compared to the same transgressions of others. This leads to a misconception that one's behaviour is based on the situation while others are based on their nature or national culture. Furthermore, judgement of another's actions as immoral is more lenient when the observer gains from the observed behaviour or immoral act (Bocian and Wojciszke, 2014 and Bocian et al, 2016).

In a business context, Holt (2006) argues that ethics and morality cannot be separated out of a manager's duties, responsibilities, considerations and decisions. Ethical relativity typically develops into a set of morals that are organisational specific which critics of ethical relativity argued become a "moral sanctuary". In conclusion, McDonald's observation is that "Each social group will consider their decision, made in the light of their moral standards, as correct and without any interest in comparing it across different social groups." This is specifically poignant and sets the context for an assessment of ethical decision making by SIEs.

5.4.2 Ethical decision making and ethical decisions

Ethics is considered to be an auto regulatory process in which one aims to find justification and meaning in one's decisions. Ethical decision-making is often portrayed as an instinctive process so that familiar and common situations lead to a one step quick and reflexive decision process (Curtis et al, 2012 and Steinbauer et al, 2014). Assuming decision-making is always conscious is more idealistic than realistic as many to most decisions are rote and so omit, bypass or neutralise morality considerations (McDonald & Pak, 1996).

In contrast, ethical judgement is an evaluation process whereby an individual considers several possible courses of action, assesses and judges the suitability of each and then acts. Ethical decision-making's internal deliberation leads to a sense of responsibility and attachment to the resulting actions.

The ethical decision-making process starts when someone becomes aware of an ethical aspect of dilemma within a decision. Depending on the individual's moral development and "moral imagination" the ethical barb may or may not be perceived as having any ethical content and so may or may not trigger reflection (Trevino & Brown, 2004; Husted & Allen, 2008 and Godwin, 2015). Active ethical judgements only occur when, an individual with moral awareness, consciously assesses the drivers and contexts to make a decision (Trevino, 1986). When any of these elements are missing then the outcome is better classified as reflexive, intuitive or routine decision.

McDevitt et al (2007) focuses on the stresses placed on individuals due to conflict, choice and commitments during decision-making. Their model places the individual within the mutually influencing contexts of their job, organisation and the external environment. Though the model lacks the explicit moral elements of Trevino, its multi-dimensional and layered structure provides a practical framework for deconstructing the complexity of ethics faced by SIEs working in Dubai.

5.4.3 Factors affecting ethical decision making

From an egotistical perspective, an unethical act would be considered ethical if it advances the individual's self-interest (Beekun et al, 2008). People with Machiavellian tendencies and/or a sense of entitlement are more likely to be exploitative and manipulative of others (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). They consider lying or bending of rules as justified under their self-interest. Machiavellianism has a strong relationship to ethical beliefs and decision-making style with this group perceiving fewer ethical problems than others (Ford & Richardson, 1994).

Interestingly, an individual's perception of their own power has been related to risk-taking in decision-making. Individuals who feel disempowered are more likely to take risks as they see risky decisions as an opportunity to pursue self-interests and status (Ronay and Hippel, 2010). Under these circumstances, an individual should be encouraged to recognise the stronger inner voice of the "should" self which appeals to and engages one's higher levels of moral development and so resist self-interested behaviour (Trevino et al, 2014).

Bazerman and Tenbrunsel (2011) identified three ethical "sinkholes", namely uncertainty, sense of individual isolation from the greater organisation and time pressures. They noted that these are early warning signs of potential self-interest. Gill (2012) identified several related but different antecedents to ethical decision-making, namely: 1. effects of ego; 2. level of self-interest involved; 3. role of peer pressure and competition causing people to act unethically; 4. existence or absence of a just society and codes of behaviour; and finally, but crucially, 5. the importance of consequence and accountability for one's actions. All of these factors were present for SIEs working Dubai (as noted in the Chapter 2) and so indicate a context that could be considered to be significantly predisposed to unethical outcomes.

Ethical decision-making research has been linked to group dynamics and sociology as people rely on others to understand and make sense of their ethical dilemmas (Lachman & Aranya, 1986; Orton, 2000; Rossy, 2011; Thiel et al, 2012 and Trevino, et al, 2014). An organisation's normative structure and culture have been shown to influence the employee's ethical context. Weak ethical cultures lead to a lack of clarity and the propensity for "diverse subcultures" to arise and coexist (Valentine et al, 2006). In these contexts, individuals are more likely to look for external validation of their ethical behaviour including peers and superiors. Moore (2008) explained organisational corruption as a group think moral breakdown that can either advance the interests of the organisation and/or the interests of the people making the decisions. McDonald (2010) observed that even when an ethics code had been formally promulgated it can be normalized and diluted by the group and the situational context. The normalisation can provide insulation from personal identification with the consequences of decisions. As such, peer group influence is a strong predictor of an individual's ethical behaviour and increases as the intensity and frequency of contact between the individual and the group increases (Ford & Richardson, 1994 and McDonald & Kan, 1997).

Ford and Richardson's (1994) research concluded that as an organisation increases in size, so the ethical values in decision-making behaviours decrease and as external competition increases so ethicality decreases. In addition, as an employee rises through the ranks to managerial level, so their ethicality appears to decrease - perhaps as a need to pursue organisational goals over personal ethics. These three organisational observations are of particular relevance to the UAE which is currently facing all of these scenarios.

Reflecting on how to inculcate ethical behaviour, Trevino (1986) noted that organisations cannot expect to achieve an ethical culture without ensuring clear and transparent consequences for (un)ethical actions and behaviour – i.e. procedural justice. When unethical behaviour goes unpunished and is tacitly condoned, then the organisation will not be able to effectively meet its ethical codes. In a subsequent paper, Trevino and Brown (2004) noted that the most effective methodology to manage ethical behaviour and conduct is to align an organisation's multiple informal and formal cultural systems to focus on doing the right thing. Though advisable, this approach would be considerably challenging in the cross-cultural and ambiguous organisational contexts encountered by SIEs from differing nationalities and cultures.

5.4.4 Effects of (un)ethical Leadership and Follower's relationships on Ethical behaviour

Holt (2006) noted that ethics and morality cannot be separated out of a manager's duties, responsibilities, considerations and decisions. In business, ethical relativity manifests as the organisation's established conventional morality which critics of ethical relativity argued is a form of "moral sanctuary". In turn, McDonald (2010) observed that "each social group will consider their decision, made in the light of their moral standards, as correct and without any interest in comparing it across different social groups." This point is specifically poignant as it sets the context for an assessment of ethical decision making by leaders and their followers.

Resick et al (2006) investigated the connection between ethical leadership and the ethical conduct of followers. The overarching finding was that there were significant differences in behaviour across cultural clusters based on the GLOBE model (House et al, 2004). Maintaining centralised decision-making and hierarchy coupled with social networks and interconnected relationships were of paramount importance for ethical leaders in Middle Eastern contexts. The South-east Asian culture cluster had the strongest endorsement of leader altruism which is of particular relevance for the SIEs in the GCC.

When a supervisor believed in the organisation's trustworthiness (and manifested this belief) then the subordinate would do the same which had implications for ethics in high-power distance relationships (Neves & Eisenberger, 2014). Other research demonstrated that leaderships' living example of ethical behaviour was more powerful in ensuring ethical behaviour than rules and compliance programs. Value based approaches were more effective than rule-based compliance as the former were based on an individual self-governance which was a stronger motivator.

Informal governance mechanisms that build on strong relationships have been shown to deliver moral excellence. These required leaders to consistently demonstrate and communicate the importance of ethical decision-making. When ethics was rooted in self-governance it enabled employees to speak up about dissatisfaction and hence challenge the status quo.

A positive correlation was demonstrated between egotistical business climates and unethical choices. However, a negative relationship was found between a caring and benevolent climate and dysfunctional behaviour and self-interest (Trevino et al, 2014). Weak ethical leadership led to lower levels of psychological safety and so encouraged organisational silence and in these circumstances ethics was threatened as employees were too scared to speak their conscience (Verhezen, 2010 and Wang & Hsieh, 2013).

Ethical leadership as a prerequisite for ethicality as there was a cascade from leaders to followers with the organisation's ethical climate mediating follower misconduct (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011, and Steinbauer et al, 2014). Ethical leadership promoted follower's self-leadership (the application of ethics in unfamiliar circumstances) and their sense of accountability via social learning. They concluded, which is completely relevant to the Dubai context, that to inculcate ethical decision-making into an organisation one needed to have ethical leadership. In addition, organisations needed to teach employees about self-leadership focusing on ethics which would assist in keeping their moral compasses intact and accountable even under unfamiliar situations.

5.4.5 Changing Ethics and Decision-making behaviours

A handful of published studies were found that related to changing organisational ethics and ethical decision making using a cooperative and action learning approach. These papers were relevant to this research as implicitly ethics was to be a factor that would be discussed in the group to enable actionable learning.

Langlois & Lapointe (2010) concluded that cooperative research was successful in developing ethicality as it led to self-regulated, authentic and stable behaviour changes which supported ethical leadership. Similarly, the approach supported ethical education and reflection in students as it stimulated self-exploration and application of an individual's own ethics (York et al, 2012). Gill (2012) likewise concluded that experiential learning was effective in developing participants' self-awareness, reflection and critical thinking to support ethical decision-making.

Brook and Christy (2013) investigated the effectiveness of action learning in enabling ethical decision-making compared to traditional management training. The authors concluded that action learning was more effective than simple structured teaching as it used facilitation (rather than instruction) to support personal growth (rather than acquisition of knowledge) which led to the development of moral character. An added benefit was the participants practicing what they learnt as they went along which led to an enduring change in their ethical behaviour and moral sensitivity.

5.4.6 Synthesis

In summary, ethical decisions or dilemmas are by their very nature complex, ambiguous processes that are prone to the destabilising effects of unethical and immoral pressures. The decision-making process aims to integrate and synthesise two aspects, namely an individual's cognitive moral development and the situational moderators - both of which can be in flux. As such ethical decision making is not a simple puzzle that is solvable with an ethics policy or a day's training, but rather by virtue of its multi-layered nature, it is quintessentially a "wicked problem" (Churchman, 1967) needing respectful engagement (Pedlar, 2008). From the few change studies available, it appears that cooperative and people centric research are considered to be an effective approach for investigating and transforming organisational ethics and ethical decision-making.

5.5 Working in Cross-Cultural Contexts

SIEs are professionals who have moved from their birth country with its national culture to work in a host country with its own national culture. The host country's national culture provides the overall cultural bedrock and background. However the host country's national culture is also influenced and stretched by the influx and assimilation of the cultures of its expatriate communities. Hence, SIEs encounter cross and multi-cultural situations that are often unfamiliar and prompt uncertainty and insecurity. An understanding of what constitutes national culture and how it manifests and differs across cultures is therefore a key ingredient of appreciating the issues faced by SIEs.

Culture, what it symbolises and entails, has been studied and theorised over for decades. Culture is an academic construct that is neither directly observable nor measurable and is only understandable by inference to verbal statements and behaviours which are observable (Hofstede, 1993). In the broadest sense "culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede, 1980). Culture is consciously and unconsciously shared, adapted and transmitted between generations and across time as a set of reinforcing principles and a patterned way of thinking that is a collective programming of the mind (Gelfand et al, 2007).

Prior to 1980, national culture was treated as a single variable (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). The deconstruction of culture into multidimensional classifications represented a subjective attempt to provide order to a complex reality. With the publication of *Cultural Consequences* in 1980, Hofstede created a new paradigm in social science. His assessment of national cultures provided the first data driven model for understanding traits or dimensions of one national culture relative to another. Since then complex and multi-variable theories and models of culture have been developing including Hofstede, 1993; Bains, 2015; Javidan, 2006; Sosika et al, 2009; Taras et al, 2009; Schein, 2010 and Meyer, 2014. A selection of these have been reviewed and analysed, see below, as the basis for describing cross cultural differences affecting SIEs.

5.5.1 Challenges and limitations of quantifying national cultures

Hofstede's model is often incorrectly used as a proxy measure for national cultures (Burton, 2012 and Curtis et al, 2012). This approach erroneously assumes that national cultures are homogeneous, while in reality, countries are multicultural particularly if we look towards India, the United States or China. Gelfand et al, (2007) caution that cross-cultural research is "blindly applying culture level theory to the individual and vice versa."

Hofstede (1993) claimed that national cultures are relatively slow forming and stable in nature and hence quantifiable. However, our interconnected and crowded world has exposed everyone to each other's cultures such that we are continually being influenced by international cultures via the Internet, social media and entertainment (Ang et al, 2007 and Friedman, 2009). Tung (2008), Burton (2012) and Curtis et al (2012) note that the original work undertaken by Hofstede may be subject to more rapid changes than previously envisaged, particularly in recent times across the younger generations due, in part, to increased interconnectedness, assimilation and normalisation of trends. In response, Hofstede (2011) rebutted these conclusions and cited more recent research that correlated the original country scores with updated scores and concluded that there was no weakening in the original correlations.

Burton (2012) coined "bi-culture" which describes individuals who differentiate between their home country/national culture and that of their working business cultures. This equates to a semi-schizophrenic adaption to cultural differences where people are fluent in one or more cultures and transition between them effortlessly. As globalisation has increased the level and magnitude of interaction via the "brain circulation" has led to cultural differences in similar socio-economic layers reducing and leading to a convergence towards a quasi-global "negotiated culture".

The insights and conclusions from these critical studies has been noted and so the approach take during this research was to use the concept of national culture with great caution and delicacy while avoiding broad brush caricatures of national cultures.

5.5.2 Comparison of three Cross-cultural and Communication Models

Hofstede's model has six dimensions of culture (2010) as summarised in Table 5.1 over leaf. The model is the most well-known - the Journal of Business Ethics noted that, over the past 30 years, 84% of papers used Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension as a research variable (Davis, et al, 2012 in Branson et al, 2015).

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) study analysed the relationship between leadership practices and cultural values (Hoppe, (nd), House R.J. et al. 2004, Javidan et al, 2006) and arrived at nine cultural dimensions. The model's primary contribution was the grouping of nationalities into ten regional clusters that exhibited culture and leadership similarities.

Meyer (2014a) proposed that cultural factors shape human behaviour and so cultural differences manifest during communication and social interactions. Cultural patterns of behaviour and belief impact our

perceptions (what we see), our cognitions (what we think), and our actions (what we do) as similarly concluded by Schein (2010). Meyer's model proposed eight scales orientated towards business environments and as such are of practical value to SIEs working in cross-cultural contexts.

It is acknowledged that there is no single best way of constructing dimensions across cultural, psychological and organisational aspects as each model has its merits and limitations (Minkov, & Hofstede, 2011). Table 5.1 presents a grouping and comparison of the key elements of the Hofstede, GLOBE and Meyer as a basis for introducing the cross dimensional terms used to describe relative differences between national cultures.

Table 5.1: Comparison of the Hofstede, GLOBE and Meyer cultural model

Model		Hofstede	GLOBE	Meyer
Grouping of Cross-Cultural Dimension	Focus	National Culture	Leadership	Interpersonal Communication
	Power	1. Power Distance	1. Power Distance 2. Assertiveness	1. Leadership style 2. Decision making 3. Disagreement & Confrontation
	Individuals & Groups	2. Individualism vs Collectivism	3. In-Group Collectivism 4. Institutional Collectivism	4. Trust base – Task/Relationship 5. Contextual Communication
	Personal Performance	3. Indulgence vs Restraint	5. Performance Orientation	6. Persuasion & Reasoning 7. Evaluation and Feedback
	Equality & Justice	4. Masculinity vs Femininity	6. Gender Egalitarianism 7. Humane Orientation	
	Time	5. Long vs Short Term	8. Future Orientation	8. Scheduling and Time
	Uncertainty	6. Uncertainty Avoidance	9. Uncertainty Avoidance	

Lack of awareness of cross-cultural dynamics leads to some SIEs blindly and naively engage in interpersonal interactions based on the unconscious assumption that culture doesn't matter. The default mechanism is to view others through one's own cultural lens and (mis)judging them accordingly. Meyer (2014a) noted that when one is in and of a culture - as fish are in and only of water— it is often difficult or even impossible to see one's own culture. SIEs, and all others, working in multi and cross-cultural contexts need an appreciation for cultural differences as well as respect for individual differences, which echoes Steel and Taras (2010).

The following sections present a selection of cross-cultural research findings that are relevant to and may affect SIEs performance and adjustment to working in cross-cultural contexts.

5.5.3 Power Distance effects on Leadership and Followers

Organisational culture and leadership exhibit a positive symbiotic relationship in multi-cultural organisational settings (Schein, 2010 and Hoppe, nd). Cross-cultural leadership research has recognised charismatic and team-oriented leadership as universally important attributes (House, 2004 and Gelfand et al, 2007).

Power distance is a widely used cross cultural dimension (please see Appendix D for details) that describes the perception and response to asymmetrical superior/subordinate relationships. Power distance, which is a relationship-based influence, is more prominent in collectivist cultures such as that of the UAE. Gelfand et

al (2007) observed that leadership, rather than empowerment, was a better motivator for followers in higher power distance cultures as authority figures are used as role models.

Abusive supervision and dominance by superiors have been correlated with tendencies for employer deviance and unethicity (Trevino et al, 2014). Hill and Atkins (2013) noted that cross-cultural miscommunications precipitated occasional conflict that in turn led to lower levels of interpersonal trust and misunderstanding of values.

Paternalistic cultures, which manifest in collectivist societies, expect people in authority to protect those in their care and in return the followers are expected to be loyal and offer diffidence (Jackson, 2013). This conclusion echoed Ouchi's (1980) reflection on the norm of reciprocity's role which is extremely important in Middle Eastern cultures but less so in Western European and North America cultures.

National cultures with high power distance and collectivism are less likely to support whistleblowing activities as there is a negative cultural perception of informing on one's peer group or superiors (Burton, 2012). More recently, Victor (2017), writing in The New York Times, noted that resolving a work-based ethical dilemma was complicated as 53% of whistle-blowers in the USA experienced some sort of retaliation as "One man's whistle-blower is another man's snitch."

5.5.4 Peer Pressure and Group Behaviour

Taras et al (2010) examined the concept of "cultural tightness-looseness" which is explained as the power of social norms and their extent of sanctioning within social networks and societies. A tight culture permits members less flexibility to express individuality as cultural values and expectations are tightly controlled and constrained. The authors concluded that cultural values are better predictors than personality traits and demographics in foretelling organisational commitment and citizenship behaviour. This finding has relevance to SIEs in the UAE which is considered a tight culture. Within culturally tighter societies, an employee's national cultural values are likely to be stronger predictors of employee outcomes and behaviours.

Social networking in collectivist societies is very important both in personal and professional contexts with the most recognisable being Guanxi in China and Wasta in the Arab world (Hutchings & Weir, 2006). In parallel, informal power structures, groupings and clans commonly arise in organisations. As SIEs are typically excluded from local groups and networks, so they coalesce into their own corporate tribes (Logan et al, 2012.). Corporate clans have been shown to have powerful moderating effects on in-group ethicality and behaviour especially in collectivist cultures as members protect the group's interests in return for loyalty (Beekun et al, 2008 and Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011).

Hill and Atkins (2013) found that non-western nationals in the UAE were better able to develop the capacity to use multiple identities in different social contexts for their own personal advantage. This ability to culturally flex could contribute to a loss of trust with cross-cultural managers who expect firm and unbendable values. In reverse, it is noted that Western managers need to come to understand that non-

Westerners are adept at assuming multiple identities. This malleability does not necessarily reflect on trustworthiness, rather it is the dominance of collectivism over individualism.

Research has shown that multicultural groups can suffer from ethnocentrism, in group biases and elevated levels of emotional conflict due to cross-cultural differences. Conversely, cultural diversity can enhance group effectiveness when the members share common goals and values (Ely and Thomas, 2001).

5.5.5 Effect of cultural differences on ethics and corruption

Cross-cultural ethics and comparing ethical values of different societies is extremely complicated (Jackson, 2014). Comparative ethics aims for a neutral perspective to understand one ethical system from another – however this inevitably leads to a judgemental outcome (Bretzke, 2013). Management across cultures inherently leads to unsound judgements as it is natural to assume and choose one's own values as best.

Statistically significant differences have been shown to exist in perceptions of ethics and ethical dilemmas across national and cultural dimensions (McDonald & Kan, 1997; Jassawalla et al, 2004; Parboteeah et al, 2005; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Bailey & Spicer, 2007; Pate & Scullion, 2009 and Kuntz et al, 2013). Specific examples of cross-cultural variations include:

- Dissimilar tolerance of consequence for the effects of unethical behaviour (Ahmed et al, 2003);
- Different appreciation and interpretation of ethical dilemmas between local and expatriate personnel (McDonald and Kan, 1997);
- Positive correlation of high-performance orientation and assertiveness dimensions with willingness to justify unethical behaviour (Pate & Scullion, 2009); and
- Nepotism was unaccepted and outlawed in individualistic cultures, while it was the accepted norm and part of social reciprocity in collectivist settings (Kragh, 2012).

Corruption, which is an unethical act, has been correlated to national cultural dimensions (Pillay & Dorasamy, 2010 and Akbar & Vujic, 2014). The research demonstrated that high power distance, masculinity and collectivism dimensions enhanced conditions for corruption as scandals were more likely to be covered up by loyal subordinates to retain favour and save face. In addition, high-powered distance generated barriers preventing subordinates from challenging a superior's unethical behaviour. The data led to the conclusion that systemic corruption was more likely in collective and long-term orientated cultures as it required planning and collusion. In contrast, arbitrary corruption was more prevalent in individualistic and short termism cultures as was opportunistic. In explaining these results, the authors noted that high power distance and fatalistic cultures societies, as found in the UAE, accepted that societies cannot be changed so accept the prevailing hierarchy while being discretely subversive. A common response was to cheat the system and operate between the lines of the social structures while pursuing self-interests and aggrandizement. In the conclusion, it was noted that organisations which are selective, had concentrated hierarchical power, were bureaucratic and opaque had a higher propensity for institutionalised corruption.

Unethical follower behaviour was shown to be useful to leaders in symbiotic relationships (Hoogervorst et al, 2010). Leaders in these circumstances, especially in collectivist cultures, faced conflicts of interest and strong negative emotions plus social pressures when deciding to condone or punish. Followers could often predict when a leader would support or extinguish unethical follower behaviour and so they factored this in when making judgements about when to pursue unethical behaviour or not. This led to the realisation that a leader's behaviour towards ethics and morality had a direct link on the subordinate's ethicality as the leader's and follower's interests were often intertwined.

Ralston and Pearson (2010) developed a cross-cultural measurement tool that assessed the upwards influencing behaviours of subordinate professionals on their superiors to get ahead at work. Self-serving, malicious and pro organizational behaviours, which are distinct from each other, were identified as operating across 30 national cultures. Of interest to this research was that these three behaviours would all be expected of a SIE in an ambiguous situation to support their continued employment and career development.

5.5.6 Cultural differences in Decision making

Differences in decision making and business ethics across cultural dimensions have been demonstrated by various researchers including Spicer et al (2004); Guss & Dorner (2011) and Dabic et al (2015b). Specific examples of correlations between national culture and decision-making behaviours include:

- ethical decision-making was correlated to perceptions of justice and power distance (Burton, 2012);
- high power distance cultures in hierarchical societies inhibited participation in management decisions as permitting engagement was seen as weak leadership (Beekun et al, 2008);
- higher power distance was more likely to lead to people being influenced by their peers during ethical decision-making (Branson et al, 2015);
- an individual's ethical intention arose out of a combination of personal ethics and organisational ethics - that is individual and situational variables (Elango et al, 2010);

Ang et al (2007) noted that effective decision-making across cultures required both cultural judgement and a dynamic ability to understand and correctly interpret all the cultural issues and signals in play. These findings led to the observation that people were unaware of or misinterpreted cultural signs, then decision-making was both ineffective and potentially damaging to relationships. Ma (2010) reflected that negotiators from high-context collectivist cultures, which are synonymous with conditions in the UAE, may see benefit in behaving unethically if their peer group context implicitly indicated that the behaviour was likely to achieve the desired outcomes. This drive for success combined, with acceptance of subordination of one's individual needs to group interests, can lead to unethical negotiating strategies. The conclusion that emerges was that the management of ethical decisions and dilemmas in cross-cultural situations was complex and needed to always be addressed and understood within an emerging context.

5.5.7 Cross cultural dimensions in the UAE

Social division and social hierarchy are ever present elements in Middle Eastern personal and professional contexts. Naithani & Jha (2010) noted that social status and treatment varies between cultures. Research has shown that host-country nationals are at the top, followed in descending order, by Western expatriates, regional nationals and Indian subcontinental Asians (Maleki & Ewers, 2007). The existing social hierarchy reinforces power asymmetries in and between cultures that have strong adherence to power distance.

Smith et al (2007) noted that managers from Arab countries are more likely to exhibit self-protective traits including self-centredness, face-saving and status consciousness. Arab managers in the workplace were observed to be typically less charismatic, participative or team orientated. They often counted on unwritten/informal rules and their subordinates and co-workers rather than relying on their own experience and training. A high reliance on unwritten rules reflected the importance of implicit communication and respecting social responsibilities and networks which are characteristic of collectivist societies.

Arab organisations' management has been noted to mirror the local paternalistic family structures with managers depending on social and connectivity of networks (Hawass, 2015). Local managers were seen to have frequent consultations as part of a decision-making process however the final decision was theirs alone and directive. Though this behaviour appeared collectivist it is actually hierarchical. SIEs who are unfamiliar with the contradiction between the apparent and the actual maybe often confused and wrong footed.

Decentralisation and empowerment of employees in individualistic and task orientated cultures, was seen to lead to severe pressure for people from collectivist and uncertainty avoiding national cultures due to the sense of pressure to perform and making the right decision (Hawass, 2015). So, while from a European perspective, empowerment of individuals was considered a positive intervention, it often had unintended consequences in a collectivist context. Empowerment of SIEs from collectivist cultures increased stress due to the unfamiliarity of having to taking responsibility for their actions and, as such, could inadvertently become a trigger for self-protective and self-interest behaviours .

Finally, research into meeting behaviour by Gulf Arabs (Kemp and Williams, 2013) provided a vignette into the workplace context encountered by SIEs in Dubai. Distinct differences in organisation rituals between Gulf Arab states and Western style/traditional meetings were observed. The most notable difference being due to timing relating to flexibility of punctuality, lateness and getting down to business. Gulf Arabs had greater flexibility than Western expatriates and were more accommodating of deviations from the agenda, accepting interruptions and informal seating. The ethnic origin of the chairperson significantly affected behaviour - when chaired by local nationals, meetings were more ritualistic and based on social networking plus local nationals are more likely to be on time, subservient and mannered. When meetings where chaired by expatriates, the opposite tendencies were noted.

5.5.8 Synthesis of cross-cultural predispositions and influences

The differences in meeting norms and etiquette (which are typically taken for granted), as encountered by SIEs demonstrates the challenges and stresses arising from everyday seemingly simple cross-cultural contexts. It is apparent that SIEs get caught in an ongoing dilemma of either applying their national ethical values or local ethical values. These challenges are exacerbated when it is difficult to assess, due to culture divides, if the perceptions of the local norms are supported or not. The implications for organisations and SIEs are that as one moves from one culture to another, one brings along your own ethics and decision-making predispositions and biases that should be consciously acknowledged and taken into consideration.

In response to these challenges, cross-cultural research continues to develop engagement and dialogue between cultures. The research enables each culture to present the situation without prejudice or being required to explain itself based on a foreign cultural framework. Cross-cultural research and awareness aim to avoid right and wrong by taking a positive, yet critical, perspective on issues from differing perspectives.

Researchers noted the distinction between individual behaviour and morality and collective/cultural behaviour and encouraged managers to recognise that there is often more commonality than differences, in particular when it came to cross cultural ethics. It was noted that parties were better able to learn about each other's cultures when they embraced pluralism and shared experiences in non-judgemental settings. This led to the observation, that from a cross-cultural perspective, for SIEs to be effective and well adjusted, they needed to navigate away from simplistic right-wrong judgemental stances in order to develop a wider context that embraced differences.

The emergent issues that were identified by the participants in the second and third group meetings form the second part of the literature review. The extended information has been presented and discussed as an overlay and extension to the original topics with the aim of generating an integrated whole to support the research findings, analysis and self-interest model.

5.6 Expatriate adjustment

During the second group meeting that focused on ethics, the participants noted that in their experience, SIEs seem to change and adapt their ethicality overtime. At the start of an assignment, SIEs lack both a "sense of psychological oneness" (Showail et al, 2013) with the organisation and an understanding of their cultural context as illustrated in Figure 2.1. This led to a broader discussion of how expatriates, both consciously and unconsciously, seem to adjust their behaviours as they start to understand their new environments and so make accommodations to fit in and be more effective. This section begins with an examination of the concept of expatriate adjustment which leads on to a description of the process of adjustment and concludes with the factors that support adjustment.

Cross-cultural adjustment is a normative process by which expatriates move towards a state of psychological and social comfort that is aligned with the host country's cultures. (Jassawalla et al., 2004). Bhaskar-et al (2005) explained adjustment as a "context-specific reflection of the stressor-stress-strain sequence" experienced by expatriates. The construct describes the amount of comfort or absence of stress attributed to being an expatriate as it fluctuates over time. Adjustment is seen as a proxy for an expatriate's ongoing stress response and accommodation of the unfamiliarity of the new environment and perspectives.

Pires et al (2006) described adjustment as the process whereby expatriates adapt to the new country and new social organisation in order to perform in their professional roles. The degree and ease of adjustment is linked to three main variables namely: cultural adjustment to the host country context; interaction and interpersonal adjustment with local and foreign nationals; and fitting into the work and organisational setting. In order to adjust, expatriates are required to make adaptations to their perspectives and adopt some of the host countries differences. The authors recognised culture shock as a barrier to adjustment which is described as a source of stress induced reactions that expatriates experience in tackling the new organisational and country contexts. When expatriates are unable to move through their culture shock, i.e. adjust to the stressed, then they may fail to adjust. Lack of adjustment has been linked poor performance and an increased likelihood of early repatriation. staying on in the new role.

Pires et al (2006) extended Bhaskar-et al's (2005) research into the adjustment process which was based on a U-curve hypothesis of social learning theory. An expatriate progressively moves through four sequential phases illustrated in Figure 5.3. The first phase is the "honeymoon" during which the expatriate is energised and exhilarated by the novelty of the new surroundings and career opportunities. During this phase, due to the lack of an understanding and appreciation of local culture and nuances, negative feedback resulting from incorrect behaviour may not be noticed. Expatriates start out living the dream while being unaware of the deeper contexts.

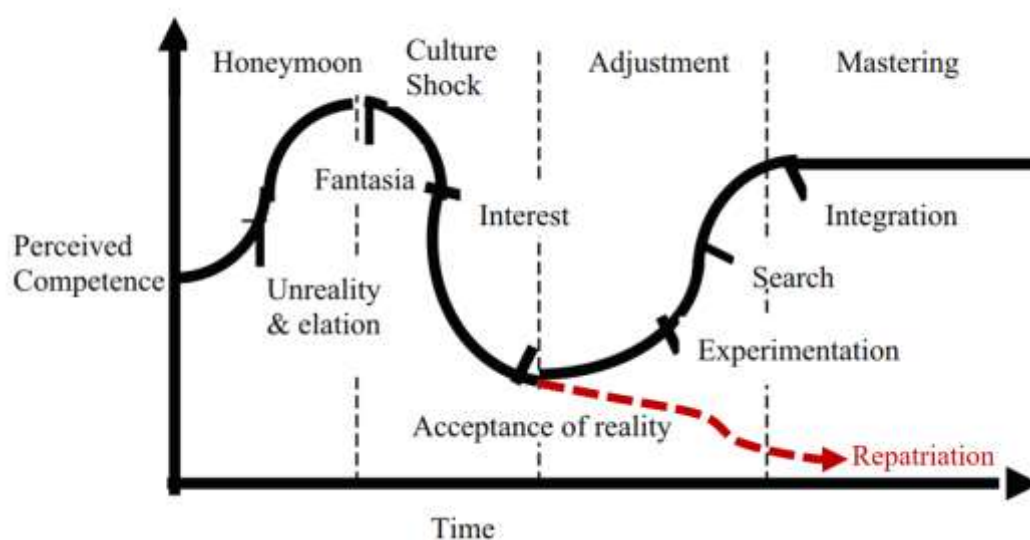


Figure 5.3 Expatriate Adjustment Cycle (Pires et al, 2006) with ammendments

The honeymoon phase ends when the expatriate's awareness grows, and they begin to recognise that there are significant differences between their expectations and the local norms which leads to a dose of reality and culture shock arising. As culture shock sets in, expatriates start to have doubts about their own efficacy as they realise that their behaviours are having negative consequences but will not yet know what to do in order to avoid and correct their inappropriate behaviour. The result is that during this phase, expatriates typically experience their weakest performance and the greatest urge to withdraw and repatriate.

Furthermore, the greater the "cultural distance" between the SIE's national culture and host/work culture the more challenging the adjustment (Cao et al, 2012). As a consequence of these vulnerabilities, an expatriate may be more or over sensitive to cues and implicit messages of their value which unintentionally contributes to the amplification of negative feedback cycles (Showail et al, 2013 and Kraimer & Wayne, 2004).

If they decide to stay, expatriates move into the third phase during which they learn to adopt different ways of behaviour and start to adjust to the local contexts. Expatriate's performance, satisfaction and sense of comfort gradually increase as they experiment with new approaches and in turn stress progressively fades as they learn how to cope with the local cultural norms. In parallel, an expatriates' expectations change as they become more realistic about their context and its constraints

The dashed red line in Figure 5.3 has been added by this researcher. It illustrates the scenario of expatriates who are either unable, unwilling or unsuccessful in adjusting their perspectives and values to accommodate the new contexts, and so choose or are forced (due to incompatibility or poor performance) to repatriate. Existing literature noted early repatriation as a possible outcome but omitted to explicitly state that a failure to adjust would likely lead to untenable cognitive dissonance, stress and discomfort so that the expatriate chose to withdraw. The corollary that emerges is that all expatriates who are able to stay and enter the mastery phase must have changed and adjusted aspects of the social and cultural perspectives. These changes would include conscious and unconscious adoptions of the local norms.

Adjustment is an on-going process by which expatriates are continually influenced by their context and peers even after they are no longer new employees (Fu et al., 2017). During the mastery phase, expatriates experienced small incremental improvements that taper off over time, but the learning process never ends. Bhaskar-et al's (2005) observed that the honeymoon period can stretch from anything from as little as two months up to one year. The bottom of the culture shock phase typically occurs within three years with expatriates starting to enter the mastering around four years into their sojourn. These time periods illustrate that adjustment is not a quick process but rather unfolds progressively over several years.

Jassawalla et al. (2004) studied the barriers to adjustment with a focus on interpersonal conflict and misunderstandings with co-workers as these are hypothesised to lead to discomfort and stress. The study recommended that expatriates are provided training, not only in cultural differences and how to behave appropriately, but also in interpersonal skills and sensitisation including conflict management, active listening and ethical reasoning. The aim of the soft skills training is to support the expatriate in being able to suspend

judgement so that they are better able to develop trust and build effective relationships across cultural divides. The observations relating to ethical reasoning and building trust are of particular relevance to this study as they relate to challenges of ethicality in cross cultural contexts and the need for SIEs to have a sense of support and trust to be able to integrate in the organisation.

Isakovic and Whitman (2013), researched academic SIEs in the UAE and concluded that formal organisational support throughout the first year is a key component of successful adjustment and performance. The low point was seen to be five months into the contract with gradual but slow adjustment taking place over the first 12 months. The authors recommend that UAE organisations, in addition to initial onboarding and orientation processes, establish ongoing support and mentoring schemes, for up to 2 years, to enable the SIE to effectively adjust and stabilise.

Similarly, Fu et al's (2017) study of SIEs concluded that the greater the socialization options provided to SIEs by their employers, the faster the social integration and learning speed which led to increased adjustment. To support adjustment, organisations are encouraged to implement a formal orientation program that extends beyond the typical, to include detailed information on the organisational values and culture and a peer support and mentoring process. In addition, Bashir (2012) noted that organisations should also offer aids and information to reduce stress and enable expatriates to make sense of the work environment. In addition, organisations should create regular opportunities to facilitate the establishment of affective commitment between the expatriate and the organisation's representative to reaffirm the expatriates' self-beliefs and abilities. All of these interventions are aimed at boosting the expatriate's sense of comfort and belonging and decreasing stress and anxiety.

5.7 Perceptions of Organisational Support

A SIE's work-related behaviour is, amongst other criteria, influenced by their organisational environmental and their experience of the employee-organisational relationship. Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is a construct used to describe an employee's views of their relationship with their employer (Eisenberger et al, 1986). POS includes "an employee's global beliefs that the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (Kraimer & Wayne, 2004).

Built on a social exchange theory foundation, POS is an implicit and de facto psychological contract between the employee and their organisation. POS fulfils the socioemotional needs of employees that arise from the anthropomorphism of the organization. This is akin to child-parent relationship and which unconsciously entrains and elicits all the commensurate challenges of child/parent relationships (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014 and Kurtessis et al, 2015). Due to this personification of organisations, employees view actions by organisational agents (i.e. managers and colleagues) as actions of the organisation itself (Eisenberger et al, 1986). Praise, approval or reprimand by an agent appears as coming from the organisation. POS is therefore strongly related to an organisation's leaders and their cultural behaviour

POS influences and is related to several aspects of employee commitment and performance (Kawai & Strange, 2014). POS affects affective commitment -the extent to which an employee has an emotional bond with the organisation; work adjustment - the extent to which an individual is adjusted and understands the behaviours required in a new role; and organizational citizenship behaviour - the propensity for an employer to behave as a good citizen and contribute to the organisation. POS, and its underlying psychological contract, are seen as a proxy for the quality of the relationship and commitment that exists between the organisation and the employee.

Kurtessis et al's (2015) meta-analysis identified three key antecedents for the establishment of positive POS. These are supervisor support by way of a leader-member exchange contract; inspirational and motivational leadership; and fairness supported by procedural justice. Hassan & Hassan (2015), developed the following model, Figure 5.4, that simply described these antecedents and the consequences of POS. A lack of any of these dimensions leads to the failure and undermining of the establishment of a positive sense of POS which in turn hinders cultural adjustment and performance.

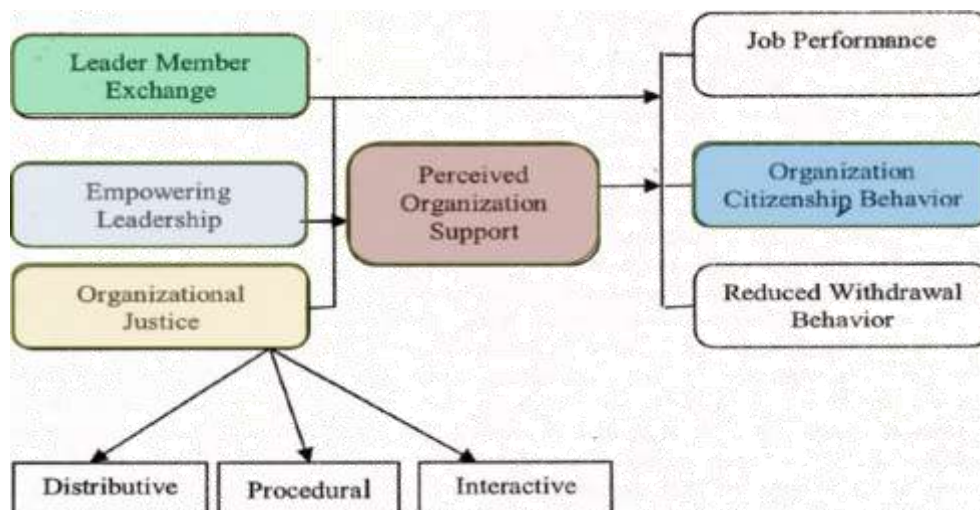


Figure 5.4: Antecedents and Consequences of Perceived Organisational Support (Hassan & Hassan, 2015)

POS has been demonstrated to be positively correlated with job self-efficacy, affective commitment, job satisfaction; professional self-esteem, work-family life balance and cross-cultural adjustment (Bashir, 2012 and Isakovic & Whitman, 2013).

When the POS antecedents are perceived as unconstructive and discouraging, then the employee may develop a negative sense POS. Negative POS was related to an increase in organisational politics, burnout, job stress and work family conflict. Forstenlechner (2010a) observed that in the UAE, the transitory nature of expatriates led to high staff turnover which in turn contributed to local organisations choosing to support the professional development of long-term expatriates. The unintended negative consequence of the local organisation's response was that expatriates perceived the behaviour as a lack of commitment towards expatriates which triggered negative POS and distrust.

Role ambiguity and role novelty, which are inherent for a newly arrived SIE, were negatively correlated to adjustment as a precursor to positive POS (Gelfand et al, 2007). Role ambiguity was also identified as an antecedent to stress which in turn was linked to unethical behaviour. The overall conclusion was that it is of material importance to reduce role ambiguity for SIEs to support their development of POS.

Wang & Hsieh's (2013) research into ethical climates concluded that POS had a positive moderating effect on reducing both acquiescence and defensive silence (behaviour predicated by fear and the need to self-protect). They emphasise the need to establish an ethical climate that supported employees speaking out about work-related issues including ethical dilemmas. Employees were more likely to lie to a manager when they have comparably low citizenship behaviour which is an outcome of negative POS (Grover & Hui, 1994). Investigating ethicality from another angle, Liu and Ding (2012) researched how POS relate to workplace deviance and negative behaviour which has particular relevance to this study. The authors concluded that an individual's ethical judgement was related to their positive perception of the workplace, i.e. positive POS, lessened the impact of workplace deviance and unethical behaviour.

Employees with strong POS believed that they could take greater risks on the organisation's behalf without feeling concern for exploitation or reprisal (Kurtessis et al, 2015). The factors that influence risk-taking behaviour (in experimental settings) included self-confidence, perceived competence and risk of persecution. The research concluded that positive POS leads to prudent risk-taking as trust enables honesty about mistakes which leads to ethics and integrity. It appeared that POS provided a sense of assurance that subordinates would be acknowledged and rewarded for good outcomes and simultaneously that the organisation had a tolerance for making mistakes. These antecedents and contexts are not typically present for SIEs in a UAE context.

Neves & Eisenberger (2014) noted that employee's pay closer attention to the organisation's actions when poor performance is being addressed or disciplinary action is being taken. Implicitly the employee is assessing if they can trust the organisation. The presence of an organisation's procedural justice and integrity was a significant factor that supported the establishment of trust, psychological safety and positive. At a wider host-country level, Forstenlechner (2010b) studied the UAE context and concluded that POS at a national level was similarly dependent on sensitivities to inequalities in national procedural justice. As expatriates perceived that they were treated with less leniency or differently to host country nationals, so perceived national (UAE) support was not being developed which led to lower affective commitment by expatriates to the host-country.

5.7.1 Establishing POS and Trust in cross-cultural contexts

Trust is a “psychological state comprising an intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations or intention of behaviour of another” (Rousseau et al, 1998). POS has been positively correlated to an employee’s trust, citizenship behaviour, altruism and compliance and so on to ethical behaviour (Organ & Ryan, 1995, Baker et al, 2006; Wong et al, 2012 and Craft, 2013

Extending the importance of the establishment of trust, Meyer (2015) noted that trust in collectivist cultures was established via networking and social interactions that were then transferred to the workplace. In an individualist environment, trust developed out of the successful performance of task-related activities that are then transposed and transferred to trust in social contexts. Hence a SIE from an individualistic background working in a collectivist environment may inadvertently behave inappropriately leading to the active creation of mistrust by either not engaging socially with their colleagues by instead focusing on the task. In reverse situations, SIEs from collectivist backgrounds working in individualistic environments, may engender mistrust by focusing on socialising and building networks rather than completing the tasks at hand. The researcher has witnessed SIEs in both contexts behaving as described and struggling to adjust, perform and establish positive POS.

Psychological contracts have been shown to emerge in all cultural settings, but the consequences of psychological contracts and organisational commitment varies across cultures (Gelfand et al, 2007). Employees from individualistic national cultures perceived psychological contracts as transactional while those from collectivist saw them as relational and for the enhancement of the independent self. Collectivist cultures had a higher tolerance for violations of psychological contracts but once the threshold was broken then there was an irrevocable and profound breakdown of trust.

Individuals from collectivist cultures were more likely to personify organisations in order to enter into relationship to make it their own – i.e. feel at home. National cultures which are high on the collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and/or femininity dimensions increased the effect of positive POS on citizenship behaviours (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004; Chiaburu et al, 2015 and Ahmed and Nawaz, 2015). Similarly, low or negative POS hindered adjustment and led to increased violations.

Showail et al (2013) examined the applicability of POS theories to professional foreign workers employed in Saudi Arabia in a study that parallels some aspects of this research. When SIEs had low POS, then job performance suffered leading to a negative feedback loop of increased stress and sense of vulnerability coupled with job insecurity. POS was seen to be even more important in cultural contexts which are insular to foreign workers as in these circumstances SIE felt more isolated than in an inclusive society.

Based on this research, Middle Eastern organisations are particularly encouraged to actively engender the antecedents for positive POS and so catalyse their employees’ prosocial citizenship. The corollary is that failing to do so leads to weaker POS and hence potential antisocial behaviour.

5.8 Job Insecurity

Job insecurity has been described as an employee's subjective perception of their sense of powerlessness to maintain their desired continuation of employment in a threatened job situation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 2010). Job insecurity was observed to be a chronic stressor that led to increased anxiety of involuntary unemployment especially when coupled with the unpredictability of future employability (de Cuyper et al, 2009a and 2009b). Fixed term contractors, who are analogous to SIEs in the UAE, accepted job insecurity as inevitable and instead were more concerned about future employment. Employee's perceptions of their employability have been negatively related to organisational commitment. Other consequences of perceived job insecurity related to dysfunctional attitudes to work and negative POS which included decreased effort, propensity to voluntarily leave and resisting change. These were shown to lead on to reduced and impaired organizational citizen behaviour, commitment, satisfaction and performance (de Cuyper, et al, 2009a, Lee Peccei, 2007 and Itzkovich, 2016).

Soylu (2007) identified residential insecurity, job insecurity, discrimination and access to local social networks as material stresses faced by foreign workers. Focusing in on residential insecurity, Soylu noted that foreign workers would typically be "hyper attuned" to any self-perceptions of poor performance. Potential dismissal and repatriation engendered job insecurity plus an increase in anxiety and stress. It was noted that the separation from family and familiar social networks was another source of stress for foreign workers. Employees from collectivist backgrounds experienced greater stress than individualist cultures, due to the greater sense of isolation. This scenario is very relevant to SIEs from the Asian subcontinent working in Dubai. Soylu proposed a model that related the SIE stresses to job satisfaction, depression and potential physical health. He concluded that foreign workers typically experience more stress overall than host country nationals. Unfortunately, his conjectures and ideas do not seem to have been followed up or supported by empirical data.

Alpander (1973) was one of the first studies published related to how working as an expatriate effected decision-making). The research demonstrated that insecurities about future employability arose due to the temporary nature of an expatriate's tenure plus the uncertainty of their relationship with the organisation. The unintended consequences of this situation were shown to be a decrease in loyalty and commitment across all organisational levels resulting in self-serving decisions.

Perceived job insecurity, born out of a sense of organisational injustice (an antecedent for positive POS), frustration or dissatisfaction with the status quo and/or the inability to change the context, have been linked to employee fraudulent intent and self-benefiting behaviour (Benjamin & Samson, 2011)

Dench (2006) and Soylu (2007) investigated the workplace stresses arising from being a SIE in the United States. As in the UAE, SIEs in the United States need a working visa which if cancelled permits them 30 days to either find a new job or leave the country. A consequence of this situation was that not every SIE was willing to be a "martyr for the ethics cause" and so became self-protective. This framing of job security

corresponds to the experiences of expatriates working in Dubai who endure ongoing stress resulting from their sense of job insecurity due to the UAE labour laws and the biennial renewal of work/residence visas.

High power distance between employees and managers of different backgrounds contributed to ineffective communication. An unintended consequence was that employees in these circumstances were increasingly sensitive to their perceptions of procedural justice and immoral behaviour which heightened their job insecurity. (Loi et al, 2012). Job insecurity has also been shown to be heightened when organisational messages, codes and rumours, both intended and unintended, spread through a highly networked environment such as that found in collectivist environments (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 2010). Incivility by leaders to subordinates, who are already insecure, was demonstrated to be perceived by the subordinate as an alert signal that increased their job insecurity. In addition, it was noted that employees working under cross-cultural conditions have self-perceptions of being deprived, compared to host country nationals, and hence were more inclined to exhibit bad behaviour. In contrast, ethical leadership was positively linked to an employee's perception of job security (Hawass, 2015).

Job insecurity, as a situational element, is increasing in the current global economic climate (Lawrence and Kacmar, 2016). A positive relationship has been established between job insecurity and emotional exhaustion. Once exhausted, an individual's ability to actively monitor and self-regulate their moral compasses becomes impaired and so it becomes more challenging to avoid unethical behaviour. This finding was akin to moral fatigue and ethical fading. The authors noted that the relationship between job insecurity and immoral behaviour due to emotional exhaustion was mediated for individuals who were embedded and identified with the organisation. This relationship was explained as being due to their greater fear of losing their job and career which is relevant to Dubai-based SIEs who would experience similar traumatic consequences of unexpected job loss.

Job insecurity, as endured by SIEs, has been shown to be an antecedent to self-preservation leading to uncivility and unethical behaviour. Job insecurity should not be underestimated as just another attitude to work but rather should be recognised as a potential source of deep trauma, life disruption and chronic organisational dysfunctionality that affects all employees and especially SIEs.

5.9 Moral disengagement and immoral behaviour

As described in section 4.6, it was noted in passing by several participants during the second LSM that some SIEs appeared to become more immoral overtime as they adjusted and changed their ethical compasses. On reflection, it was concluded that the process by which people became immoral could be an important element in how SIEs manifested and actualised self-interest during decision making. The following paragraphs present a theory of moral disengagement (Bandura et al, 1996) and then relate the process to a SIE's specific contexts.

Ethics, when put into practice, leads to the development of a reflective capacity that precedes action and should enable an individual to estimate and evaluate the impacts and consequences of their actions and so behave morally (Langlois and Lapointe 2010). Moral reasoning is operationalised through the development of self-regulatory mechanisms during which moral agency is exercised (Bandura et al., 1996). Moral standards are developed by training and mentoring, noticing the responses of others to (un)ethical conduct and ongoing maturation via self-reflection. Over time, an individual's moral standards come to serve as both deterrents and guides to ensure morality and thus have a sense of self-worth. Individuals refrain from violating their own moral standards to avoid having to deal with self-censure that is associated with shame, guilt and remorse. Bandura noted that "anticipatory self-sanctions thus keep conduct in line with internal standards. It is through the ongoing exercise of self influence that moral conduct is motivated and regulated."

It was noted that having developed a self-regulatory capacity did not imply that individuals would always strictly adhere to their inner codes. The controlling system would only work if it was activated and its activation could be selectively inhibited or influenced by other psychosocial processes including moral disengagement. Moral disengagement has been described as the capacity that individuals have, or develop, to cognitively re-evaluate and restructure their actions so that the actions are seen as less harmful. Moral disengagement can be activated by reframing events to minimize an individual's sense of responsibility or to diminish the suffering caused to others (Moore, 2007).

5.9.1 Moral Disengagement Model

Bandura et al (1996) developed a model, based on social cognitive theory, that aimed to explain how moral disengagement links immoral actions with the decision mechanisms that entrain self-justification of unethical behaviour. The model, as per Figure 5.5 below, linked four sets of self-regulatory mechanisms and sanctions that enabled an individual to become selectively disengaged from their "reprehensible conduct", the ensuring "detrimental effects" and or the victim.

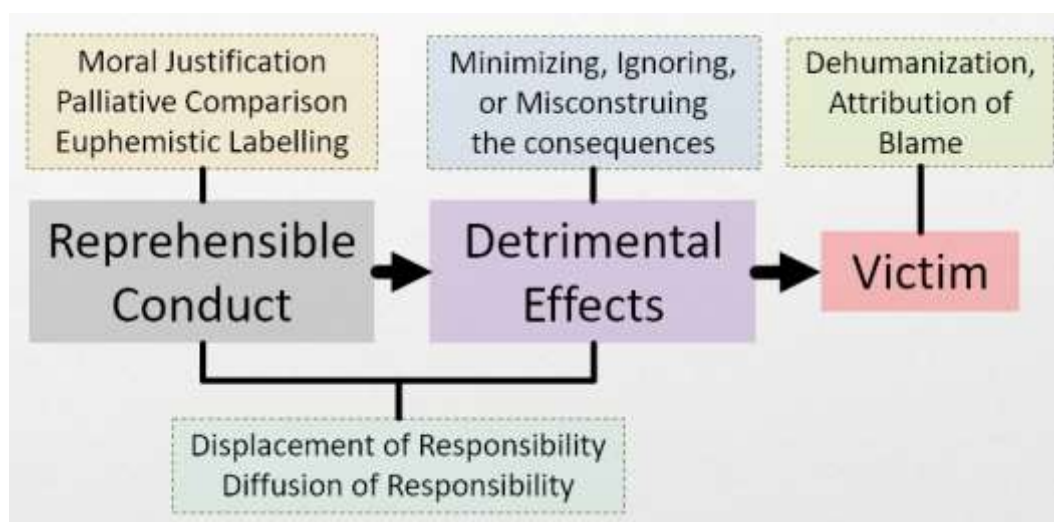


Figure 5.5: Moral Disengagement Process (Bandura et al, 1996)

Reprehensible conduct or unethical actions are shown to be made acceptable by either; simple moral justification that may have arisen from a sense of entitlement or Machiavellian tendency; palliative comparison that reframed the action as not as bad as other actions; and or euphemistic labelling of the action that portrayed it as inoffensive or significantly softened. The mechanisms related to the distortion of the detrimental effects centred around minimising, overlooking or misrepresenting the consequences of the actions so that individuals felt less discomfort. By displacing or diffusing responsibility, that is laying the blame for their actions on a third party or parties, the morally disengaged individual was able to vicariously apportion liability and so their share of the guilt was reduced and made palatable. The fourth pathway related to the portrayal of the victim as having been part of the cause of the problem so that they can be either blamed or dehumanised.

A key element of the model is that the disengagement of self-censure and moral values is logical and deliberate. The process is unconsciously structured to enable one to avoid psychological discomfort by externalising or justifying the immoral activities. Moral disengagement has been shown to act as a pre-emptive panacea for the psychological discomfort that arose from knowingly undertaking immoral decisions (Moore, 2008). As such individuals with high moral disengagement and low moral awareness were more likely to behave unethically (Kish-Gephart et al, (2014). In addition, the ability to disengage morally was seen to increase the sense of self-righteousness that supported self-interest.

Moral disengagement is situational such that once one's internal moral compass has been activated then it is unlikely that the individual will become morally disengaged or use disengagement (Moore, 2008). The author reflected on the specific context of when organisational goals were perceived as impossible or extremely challenging. If unethical behaviour was seen as a potential solution, then under these circumstances, it was predicted that self-interest would be triggered with moral disengagement being used to self-justifying the ensuing immoral behaviour.

Geipel et al (2015) set out to investigate if taking decisions using a foreign language, as opposed to one's native language, affected moral judgement. When using a foreign language, a person is less certain of the exact meaning, so becomes more prone to white lies and permitting harmless violations of social norms. The sense of distance and ability to feign ignorance when using a foreign language led to a detachment from moral rectitude. This behaviour could be classed as a combination of moral justification, misconstruing consequence and displaced responsibility. In addition, this research points to the ethical implications for SIEs working in a foreign language as they could use the rationalisation of misunderstanding to justify (consciously or unconsciously) or deny unethical behaviour.

As previously discussed, Beekun et al., (2008) noted unethical acts would be considered ethical if they advanced the individual's self-interest and that individuals that have a sense of entitlement are more likely to be exploitative and manipulative of others (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). Lying or ignoring rules are seen as justifiable under the influences of self-interest and Machiavellianism (Ford & Richardson, 1994). Self-

serving behaviour was seen to be exacerbated by uncertainty which in turn led onto unethical action (Johns, 1999). Reviewing these observations against the moral disengagement model leads to them being recognised as mechanisms that facilitate reprehensible actions.

5.9.2 Moral disengagement's effects on organisational decision making

Even if an individual has grown up with a strong ethical and moral sense, the immoral and bad behaviour of others from peer pressure can be materially undermining (Gardner, 2007). Peer pressure has been shown to lead to false consensus bias which in turn affected ethical perceptions and decision-making (Craft, 2013). A team's collective moral disengagement can be seen as a manifestation of an emergent groupthink that is supported by selective disengagement to enable peer exoneration (White et al, 2009; Bandura et al, 2000; and Janis, 1982). Moore (2008) extended Bandura's theories to explain organisational corruption as a group think moral disengagement that could either advance the interests of the organisation and/or the interests of the people making the decisions. Gardner (2007) reported that young professionals had an established assumption that cheating and unethical behaviour was the price to pay for success - it seemed that "everyone does it." These are examples of the displacement and diffusion of responsibility.

Propensity to moral disengagement has been demonstrated to be positively correlated with fraudulent decisions, self-serving decisions and the reporting of unethical behaviour in self and others (Trevino et al, 2014). Hoogervorst et al (2010) demonstrated that decisions are often distorted for self-enhancing purposes as per moral disengagement. In contexts that included trade-offs between morality and self-interest, individuals were observed to be biased by self-deception and self-enhancing tendencies which resulted in unethical decision-making. "Ethical fading" was used to describe how these behaviour patterns are repeated and over time became established situational morality (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). The authors opined that self-deception was at the root of self-interest biases and immoral behaviour. Self-deception, via moral disengagement, enabled ethical implications to fade into the background thus supporting individuals' unscrupulous behaviour without their realisation of the same. They further noted that due to this self-deluding process, ethical codes and training are rendered ineffective as the training is static, but the process is active. Of particular significance for SIEs is that anxiety has been shown to lead to an elevated risk of misinterpretation of any ambiguous stimuli as being threatening which in turn negatively affected judgement and decision-making (Cross and Brodt, 2001).

Self-control has also been demonstrated to be a finite resource that can be used up and depleted over time. As one becomes emotionally and ethically fatigued, so moral disengagement is more likely (Trevino et al, 2014). Long-term SIEs working across cultures will undoubtedly have a sense of ethical fatigue from continually doing the right thing. Under these circumstances it is predictable that an increased disposition will arise over time for letting the brake slip and engaging in unethical and self-serving behaviour.

Messik (2009) proposed that distortions of judgement that influence business decisions due to self-interest are often denied by organisations due to the invisibility of these actions and processes. Employees honestly

believed that they were behaving and acting as objective and fair decision-makers as the conflicted commitments arose at a preconscious level. Hoogervorst et al (2010) and Kahneman et al (2011) concluded that organisations should be more aware that their leaders might not always be acting in line with the company's interests due to self-interest. They reasoned that there was both deliberate lying and deception, which would be denied, and an equal measure of unconscious self-deception and post decision rationalization. If confronted, decision-makers may answer truthfully while being blissfully unaware of their own bias. Hence employees cannot be expected to self-regulate and judge whether they are biased as they will tend to blindly recuse themselves.

Moral segmenting has been described as a response to an employee's conflict between personal and organisational ethical standards. It enabled ethical standards to be changed and modified in response to the context - hence morality was observed to be neither stable nor static (Mudrack & Mason, 1996 and Moore, 2008). Similarly, Laroche (1995) noted that "double strategies" enabled managers to dissociate from "what they do and what they think, what they really think and what they should think". Establishing and maintaining a tolerance to cognitive dissonance and the discrepancies between personal and private views was shown to be a necessary competence for surviving in ambiguous and unfamiliar settings such as SIEs joining a new organisation. These findings are examples that illustrate moral disengagement based on moral justification

5.9.3 Cross cultural issues

Individualism vs collectivism is one of cultural dimensions that has been shown to most effect ethics and ethical decision-making as it reflects how dilemmas are resolved based on human interests (Lachman & Aranya, 1986, and Vitell et al, 1993). Morality in collectivist societies is contextualised according to the in-group benefits of a decision while externalising any out-group consequences which is a manifestation of a group ignoring the consequences of the detrimental effects. Collectivist cultures emphasised hierarchy, duty and interdependency while individualistic cultures valued avoidance of harm and individual rights. Decision making in individualistic cultures was based on personal beliefs overpowering group norms. In collectivist cultures, though people may have held personal and private beliefs that differed from group norms, they would be unable or unwilling to behave contrary to the group norms. Individualistic cultures perceived ethical dissonance as hypocritical. The authors argued that people from individualistic cultures were therefore more likely to use moral reasoning for making judgements than from collectivist cultures.

This line of reasoning had profound implications for SIE's working across cultures and particularly for SIEs from individualistic cultures that are working in a collectivist environment. The importance of networks and groupings should not be underestimated, as decisions that negatively impact one's network or personal standing, would be ill-advised. Reflecting this to SIE in Dubai, they may unconsciously place their own interests before those of the company to self-protect and retain membership of their group for protection.

Collectivist cultural values have been shown to be better predictors than personality traits in predicting organisational commitment and citizenship behaviour (Taras et al, 2010). In culturally collectivist and high

power distance dominated contexts, like the UAE, the outcome is an increased predisposition to collective moral disengagement. The ultimate consequence of group immorality is “moral collapse” which occurs when groups become isolated from ethical corporate leadership and enforcement of ethical codes (Shadnam & Lawrence, 2011). In explaining these results, the authors noted that high power distance and fatalistic cultures societies, appeared to accept that societies cannot be changed and so they accept the prevailing hierarchy while being discretely subversive (Pillay & Dorasamy, 2010 and Akbar & Vujic, 2014).

Finally, impression management is a conscious intention to present a false persona to create a positive impression to conform to social and organisational expectations. The facade allows the individual to appear to comply and be ethical while hiding their true feelings and actual behaviours (Beekun et al, 2008). When one member of a group cheats then other members of the same group is also more likely to cheat. Individuals adapted and normalised their level of unethical behaviour to the prevailing ethical norms (Trevino et al, 2014). Expatriates have been shown to normalise their ethical behaviours to the local context and over time this led to shifts in the ethical compass shifts (Bailey and Spicer, 2007). Bretzke (2013) termed “lowest common denominator (LCD) ethics” to explain a level of ethical tolerance that was acceptable to all in a group. This suggested a race, along a path of moral disengagement, to the lowest common ethical standards in cross cultural contexts as experienced by SIEs.

5.10 Conclusion

There is a significant body of existing knowledge relating to various aspects of the research problem. The literature review has provided a solid foundation from which to understand and explore the multi-layered and complex challenges faced by SIEs working in Dubai, UAE. Current research supported the proposition that SIEs are exposed to various challenges arising from their own expectations as an expatriate combined with a range of legislative, organisational, ethical, social and cross-cultural stresses. The established theories and data have provided significant insights into the internal workings and interactions of decision making, ethics, perceived organisational support, job insecurity and moral disengagement in cross-cultural environments. The complexity of the issues nested within the research problem, alluded to in the revised Venn diagram (Figure 5.2 on page 27), have been to a point explored in the literature.

However, there was a lack of research addressing the full set of interdependent and mutually reinforcing issues and consequences encountered by SIEs in Dubai. A gap existed in the academic research and knowledge regarding the cumulative effects and interactions of these issues as the problem had not previously been studied in a holistic manner. The goal of management and cooperative inquiry is to provide useful and usable tools for professional practitioners to deploy in their organisations to address real problems. The existing body of knowledge does not provide a simple nor sufficiently integrated or synthesised explanation for the specific context of SIEs working in Dubai. An inclusive description and explanation of the antecedents and consequences of a SIE’s specific social and work context is lacking. The proposed problem statement and study, by aiming to integrate the disparate elements of the problem into

a holistic model, will extend existing knowledge and provide much-needed support to professional managers in the region.

Using the literature review as an overall formwork, this study's next step was to test and apply the existing knowledge in situ, using a Cooperative Inquiry framework, to corroborate, refute and/or extend the current knowledge and theories. The following section presents the findings and data that was gathered from and with the participants during the deployment of the research program.

6 Research Data and Analysis

A summary of the participant's insights, reflections and learnings from each of the learning set meetings, and these influences the literature review, has been reviewed in Section 4.6. The main body of this chapter presents a thematic analysis of the data that were obtained from the transcripts of the learning set meetings and participant's reflections. Each of the identified themes, that progressively and chronologically emerged from the on-going research program, is discussed and reviewed within the context of the participants' being SIEs working and living in Dubai. The chapter starts with a discussion of how the research data were captured and analysed as per the proposed data analysis methodology presented in Section 4.4

6.1 Data capture and thematic analysis

The participants' views, observations and reflections, the raw research data, was gathered as planned by taking anonymised handwriting notes during the LSMs and follow on discussions. These notes were subsequently transcribed into an electronic document and augmented with the researcher's reflections on the participants' contributions and perspectives. The unedited transcribed notes, dialogues, debates and reflections from the LSMs exceeded 20,000 words. Appendix E contains a sample of the participants' unedited statements (raw data) to faithfully convey their feelings, emotions and discussion contexts. The unabridged literal text, with the grammatical idiosyncrasies retained, provides an immersive perspective for understanding the experiences of being a SIE living and working in Dubai.

The thematic analysis was undertaken in conformance with the process and guidance presented in Section 4.4. Preliminary data analysis was undertaken after each of the learning set meetings so that the codes, groups and themes progressively developed and emerged over the entire research period. The observations and reflections obtained from the concurrent analysis enabled the interim insights and results to be fed forward into the research program which was modified accordingly.

Manual thematic analysis of the textual data was adopted in preference to a computer-based data coding due to the highly contextual and implicit messages and meanings contained in the raw data (Ktari, 2012). The first step of the TA covered the analysis of the transcripts' textual data using codes that were then sifted into clusters of similar statements and material observations.

Each set of statements was reviewed and interpreted in the context of the overarching research question to identify the key themes. Statements were grouped based on both their explicit and implicit-contextual meaning which necessitated taking account of colloquial English and sarcasm.

Approximately 250 statements comprising 6,700 words were analysed, refined to remove overlaps and duplications and distilled down to the following fourteen themes listed overleaf.

- Decision-making and biases
- Ethical Awareness and Training
- Role, Situational, Group and Organisational Ethics
- Ethical leadership
- Adjustment of ethical standards
- Awareness of cross-cultural models and theories
- Cross cultural Management and Decision-making
- Ethical behaviour in cross cultural contexts
- SIE Motivations
- SIE adjustment
- UAE legal framework
- Perceived Organisational Support
- Job Insecurity
- Moral Disengagement

6.2 Emergent themes

The following sections sequentially present and explain the key themes and their interactions with each other and to the overall research problem. Each section is supported by précises of the participants' anecdotes and narratives. These background stories provide the contextual and ethnographic framing from within which the data and themes' relevance to the research problem were understood from the inside-out.

The ordering of the themes in the following sections mirrors the topics and insights that progressively emerged from the learning sets as the research program unfolded. A summary of the agendas and insights for each of the learning sets is presented in Table 4.2 on page 23. By presenting the themes in the chronological order in which they arose, so one is able to recognise the progressive deepening of the participants' understanding of the issues nestled within the problem. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that the participants start to link previous insights to new topics and make connections of the interrelationships of challenges in their environment as the research progresses.

Participants' observations, shown as indented italicised quotations, are faithfully presented without grammatical corrections to provide first-hand appreciation of the research environment context and texture.

6.2.1 Decision-making and biases

The opening discussion, during the first learning set meeting, naturally focused on organisational decisions and decision-making. The group's observations and interactions were comparatively initially stilted due to the lack of trust or sense of psychological safety.

The general consensus that surfaced was that most organisational decisions are rote, habitual and/or based on precedent, with just a minority requiring consideration of alternatives and active decision-making. The following two participant observations illustrated these views:

"many decisions are just routine, I pause when they are complicated or challenging and so there is not much reflection when making simple decisions"

"Most decisions are mundane, the material decisions of few"

Even though the participants were middle management level, as the discussion progressed, so they came to recognise that they had never really reflected on how they came to and made decisions in the workplace.

The topic was not one that had previously consciously pondered or discussed. This realisation was one of the first cracks to appear in the outer shell of the research problem as it enabled the participants to become open to the possibility that organisational decision-making was perhaps an issue, that even though they had taken for granted, may merit more consideration.

As the discussion broadened, so the participants were able to discuss their experiences of the differences in decision-making and how biases, with hindsight, may have arisen. A participant described how in their experience of working in the same organisation but with different teams, they had noticed differences in the way decisions were made-and that these differences appeared to originate from cross-cultural origins. They noted as follows, with the text in square brackets providing the context of the conversation leading up to the statement:

"Different teams [that comprise different national cultural personnel], from a cultural perspective, take decisions in different ways and based on different priorities."

The participant did not explicitly elucidate how the priorities are different as at this stage of the programme the trust had not been sufficiently established to be explicit about negative opinions and perspectives.

A participant highlighted that the decisions they took in their current role (as in SIE working in a multicultural Dubai-based organisation) were much more open to flexibility than they'd experienced in previous organisational contexts.

"I don't see this organisation as a Middle Eastern organisation. There's much more flexibility in my decisions than in other organisations which have layers and procedures. There are pros and cons to this-but we need to have control. This organisational context gives flexibility and agility."

In this statement, the participant is observing that they did not view the current employer as just a "Middle Eastern organisation" and by implication they saw the organisation as a multicultural international organisation. However, in the current context, they still felt that they had less rules and structure, "layers and procedures", to follow than in similar organisations in other locations. The statement concludes that the existing organisational context provides, unconsciously or deliberately, more flexibility and agility there would be expected in similar international organisations.

The conversation moved on to the differences in professional codes and how they are enforced. The group included three lawyers who asserted that the legal profession's ethical standards were more stringent and the consequences for breaking the codes were both more likely and consequential. Furthermore, their professional had included specific modules relating to ethics and ethical behaviour. The lawyers were all members of international bar associations, and even though they were practising as lawyers in the UAE, there was still subject to the international bar associations' code of practice. They emphasised that they would not consider acting unethically as it could lead to the dire consequences of being dis-barred even though they were geographically far away from their original chambers. The lawyers' ethical standards and codes of practice was a theme that re-occurred throughout the learning sets and was re-emphasised at different times

including during the discussion of ethics and moral disengagement in later sessions. The following observation illustrated their perceptions of the differences of acting as a lawyer or as a person in the street:

“So as a lawyer I’m ethically bound but as an individual I would be different and so ethics is different between different professions”

It was noted by an accountant that should they behave in a grossly unethical manner such that they patently contravened their codes of conduct then they could be struck off the professional register. However, the subtext was that they would only be stoppable for gross negligence or misconduct and that the likelihood of this being proven was less likely than that for the lawyers.

In contrast other participants who were also members of professional institutions did not exhibit the same concerns for ethical behaviour. They patently noted that as they were working across or outside of their professional context, so they were not bound by professional codes of practice. The following statements presented this perspective:

“As an engineer working in finance, I do not have that professional constraint”

“A non-professional is more likely to engage in unethical behaviour”

This exchange raised the importance of professional codes of conduct and the differences in ethical self-awareness across professions. The consensus reached was that a professional working within their profession was materially different and more constrained than either a nonprofessional or a professional working out of their profession. Professionals, bound by internationally applicable codes of professional practice, were perceived to be less vulnerable to personal biases in the workplace. This led to the corollary that employees who were not part of professional fraternities could be more prone to biases and behave unethically as there would be little to no consequence if found out. Accordingly, people working without professional code of conducts could have a heightened potential for unethical behaviour.

These dialogues led to the participants coming to recognise that differences may exist in the organisations decision-making processes due to cultural, professional and or personal backgrounds and circumstances and hence biases may be an issue that warranted more investigation.

6.2.2 Ethical Awareness and Training

The second LSM focused on ethics and at the very start clearly exposed that, besides the lawyers, the remaining participants had had no formal ethical training since introductory courses as part of their university education. In addition, the non-lawyers observed that they had not had any formal ethical training or examinations related to ethics as part of the admissions process to their professional institutions. These observations set the context for the rest of the session in that the majority of participants acknowledged that they were comparatively ignorant and uninformed about ethics in the workplace.

As the opening discussion progressed, so the participants came to reflect on the broader consequence of the lack of organisational ethical training and ethical ignorance. It is important to note that the research organisation, at the time of the study, was not providing ethical training to its employees and that ethical training is not the norm across medium to large local organisations. The participants made these observations:

“There is a lack of ethical training that leads to a false sense of entitlement which in turn leads to the propensity and predisposition or opportunity for unethical behaviour.”

“People don’t view doing wrong things as wrong”

The implications that arise from this discourse are that in organisations that failed to provide ethical training, such as the research organisation, employees could use their ignorance of ethical standards as a defence and justification of unethical behaviour. In turn this could be seen to be contributing to the activation of moral disengagement as the employees would be able to morally justify their actions based on a lack of knowledge and the deniability of expected behaviours. On reflection, a lack of ethical training could perhaps be perceived by employees, on an unconscious level, as tacit corporate condonement and an entitlement to not have to behave in organisational codes of practice. The recommendation that arises is for local organisations to develop and integrate ethical training and examinations into induction programmes and ongoing ethical programs to ensure all employees understand ethical standards and to place a barrier across any defences of deniability or lack of knowledge.

6.2.3 Role, Situational, Group and Organisational Ethics

The participants’ challenges and experiences of situational and ethical relativity in the workplace was a recurrent discussion topic across several LSMs. Even though the participants had come to trust one another, they were still keenly aware of each other’s organisational position context, and so those conversations were kept relatively non-specific to avoid directing blame, judging others or creating negative consequences for the participant.

The discussions started out based on the premise that colleagues appeared to be ignorant of ethical standards and norms (as explained above) and so behaved in ways that were potentially unethical or skirted ethicality. The participants also observed that it was not unusual for colleagues to express or suggest actions that would have been out of place in organisations with formal ethical policies or in other countries with stricter ethical norms. Ethics was noted as being one of the biggest challenges facing businesses in the local context with the following observations summarising their thoughts:

“They don’t understand that what they are saying is wrong and should not even be said. But from their perspective it’s fine. In Europe, they’d be prosecuted for saying that.”

“So, someone behaving unethically from their own perspective may not be judged as unethical, but from other view this is perhaps an unethical mistake.”

The participants broadly agreed that they had noted in their current and previous roles that ethics within an organisation varies greatly. Differences in ethics were noted based on cultural background, knowledge of the team in the organisation and career path. The consequence of the intra-organisational differences in ethics was they recognised that, in order to be successful, their professional ethics needed to be flexible to accommodate (i.e. adjust) to specific contexts. The following statements highlighted these challenges:

“As lawyers, ethics is often a challenge especially when a team has a different view on ethics. Ethics is team-based”

“decision-making is not absolutely ethical because people are human and therefore this differs across cultures. In addition, ethics are also dependent on where one is in their life, where they are living and the context - so ethics is dependent on your role and situation”.

These discussions indicated that the participants had experienced, without being aware of the underpinning academic concepts, that ethics varied and adjusted over time to take into account situational, role, cultural and group contexts (Gill, 2012). Several participants noted, in confidence, that they had become more sensitive to ethical issues and hoped that the broader organisation would develop similar understandings. The participant’s conscious recognition of ethical relativity and its consequences was one of their key actionable learnings that came out from their participation in research.

6.2.4 Ethical leadership

The literature review emphasised that an organisation’s leadership’s ethical standards and the leader-follower relationship were significant influences that affected the ethical behaviour of both parties. The participants were very clear in their views that they were materially influenced by the ethical orientation of their line managers. They all, in one way or another, related how they had followed the lead taken by the line manager regarding ethical behaviour. It is important to note that the following statements were recorded before the participants had been exposed to the effect of hierarchy and power distance in cross-cultural contexts. The participants provided the following personal insights and their experiences of leadership and its impact on (un)ethical behaviour:

“Ethical thinking flows down in an organisation i.e. from the top and the leadership. Each brings their own views on what is right and it is moved down to the organisation.”

“What the boss sees as ethical becomes the organisational code of behaviour”

“To survive one must follow the leader’s ethical stance. Follow the leader. The one who is leading defines the ethical behaviour and culture.”

“Tone at the top is very important. If the senior does it then it is a gate for me. So, an expat boss plus an expat subordinate is a potentially dangerous relationship that could lead to unethical behaviour”

These observations point to the consequences of high-power distance relationships as providing greater predisposition to unethical behaviour on the part of the follower when the leader is behaving unethically. Additionally, the participants were unwittingly using displaced responsibility, “they told me to do it”, as

justification for behaving unethically which is another example of how SIEs seemed to be nudged along a pathway towards moral disengagement.

A final point was raised about the changes in social ethics of expatriates compared to the observed behaviours and norms of the host country nationals. A body of uninformed opinion exists that local nationals are able to get away with far more unethical behaviour than foreigners. The reality was that local nationals were bound by a different set of ethical constructs that were highly dependent on relationships and that their behaviour was dictated by rules and norms that were either not known to or misunderstood by guests of their country. The participants' views on expatriate behaviour in the social environment were striking in that they condemned the socially unacceptable behaviour of some expatriates as illustrated in the following statements :

"They [expatriates] are more native than the natives"

"Expats often exaggerates their own interpretation/perspective of the local's unethical behaviour to justify their own subsequent unacceptable behaviour."

These observations noted how expatriates can be guilty of distorting the worst aspects of the local culture to justifying their own socially unacceptable behaviour which is a manifestation of moral disengagement.

6.2.5 Adjustment of ethics standards

The participants reflected that the ethical standards of their colleagues appeared to have changed and adjusted over time. The adjustments were generally seen as a fading and drop of ethical standards that was made in order to align with their peers, other teams or external organisations. They observed that "they had to adjust" so that ethics was not a barrier to competitiveness or the delivery of results. The reference, in the second statement below, to "conflicts" relates to the challenge of deciding which ethical standards to uphold, with the tailing off at the end of the sentence indicating that it's never a simple decision. The third statement illustrated how the participant had remembered rationalising, and changing, their ethicality in response to the local context.

"But even people working in their professions when they step off the plane [and become a SIE] they behave differently and relax"

"Conflicts can arise due to differences between ethics of an organisation and the external ethics of the market/context....."

"One needs to first consider what I would do in my own country and then think/reflect on what I do/need to do in the UAE."

At the time of these discussions the researcher and participants were unaware of the concept of diffuse and displaced responsibility as a pathway to moral disengagement. The observations relating to the changes and adjustments in one's ethicality due to being a SIE led the researcher to return to the literature and subsequently extending the literature review to include expatriate adjustment and moral disengagement.

As the participants dialogue deepened, so they moved on to a discussion of the consequence of ethical adjustment. The tone of the conversation was that ethical behaviours and standards were significantly threatened in those multicultural organisations that lacked ethical codes and regulations. They were dissatisfied with the situation and were disparaging of outcome even though they personally acknowledged the role in the fading of ethical standards. The following statements illustrated their views on the state of ethics in their current and previous roles as SIEs.

“[The consequence of] multicultural environments is not raising ethics to the best behaviours or standards but instead descending to the lower standards. The lowest common denominator, the lowest absolute ethical or is that just the lowest relative ethics?”

“[Ethics is a] Race to the bottom [in this context]”

“When people are in a group they change their morals to the collective and typically downwards. We shift to their view. Will become morally numb.”

The participants had strong views that the consequence or likelihood of being caught being unethical was a significant antecedent to unethical acts and behaviour. When one's perception was that the risk (consequence and or likelihood) of censure was low, then they proposed that SIEs would be more prone to unethical behaviour. They added that in the UAE it is uncommon for organisations to publicly prosecute employees – rather these matters are dealt with discretely to avoid embarrassment as per the following statements.

“Ethics is also predicated on the rule of law, but unfortunately the rule of law does not/is not systematically applied in the Middle East, so this leads to ethical differences in behaviour.

“The key issue is the actual consequences of [unethical] actions in the magnitude and consequence and if they have backup plans. “

There was tacit consensus that SIEs, working within their professions but outside of their home countries and professional associations, also tended towards moral disengagement. The mental justification for a change in ethicality slowly developed over time as they come to see that in a Dubai context, the likelihood of being found negligent, being prosecuted and then getting disbarred were reduced to minimal. It was noted that in this context, SIEs may push the boundaries on what is ethically acceptable as a reasonable and calculated risk and this way rationalise their unethical acts by diminishing the consequences.

The participants referred to their experiences of having witnessed unethical behaviour and seeing it go unpunished by being tacitly ignored, condoned or buried by the organisation. It was noted that unethical employees, after being dismissed, had subsequently departed the company without their peers ever understanding the true reasons for their leaving. This was seen as being due to the face-saving nature of avoiding public embarrassment by local organisations. In this way, an unethical individual's professional career would not be tarnished so that when they repatriated the rest of the organisation and their professional network would be unaware of their unethical behaviour.

Furthermore, the consequences of unethical actions of short term SIEs only typically came to light at a time after they had already moved onto another role in a different organization. Accordingly, the likelihood and the timing of the consequences materialising for unethical behaviour were seen as elements in understanding a SIE's approach to ethical risk and unethical behaviour. The researcher has also seen this occur several times in his organisation and other organisations in Dubai which supported the notion that people behave unethically because they do not expect to be unmasked in public and lose their reputation (Holt, 2006).

On top of ethical fading and changes in perception of consequence, ethical fatigue was a reoccurring topic as the participants repeatedly noted how challenging it was to continually maintain their ethical standards. Sustained chronic peer and hierarchical pressure, coupled with adjustment to local contexts, wore away and drained the participants with the eventual outcome seeming to be gradual capitulation and moral disengagement. Though "challenged" was used in the following statement, the tone and context more accurately implied ongoing passive coercion that led to the participant eventually capitulating by not speaking up. This statement also suggested the existence of organisational silence and fear of speaking up (Verhezen, 2010).

"Expats are repeatedly challenged to be unethical i.e. act unethical to preserve themselves and often choose to keep silent when they know unethical activities are occurring."

The participants' observations seem to suggest that when an ethical vacuum existed due to leadership and codes, then it appeared that ethical standards tended to fall. Under these circumstances SIEs were unlikely to stand up and champion ethical rectitude, and swim against the current, but rather it was more likely that they would base their moral standards on the lowest ethics being displayed in the group. The combination of weak ethical leadership, lack of enforcement of standards and sustained manager and peer pressure was able to trigger moral disengagement. The outcome was considered to be that the group's ethical norms would sink to the "lowest common denominator" (Bretzke, 2013). It follows that multicultural environments without formal ethical training were seen to be more prone to unethical behaviour than those that had ethical codes and active leadership.

6.2.6 Awareness of cross-cultural models and theories

For all but one of the participants, the third LSM was their first introduction to cross-cultural models and theories. The discussion initially focused on preconceived ideas about other cultures and their approach to communication, management and ethical issues. The following selection of observations indicated that with just a short introduction to cross-cultural theory, the participants were quickly able to understand the deeper implications and challenges of working in such a context.

"legal opinions received from local firms are different to international legal opinions. Locally there is low content and high context, while for international lawyers there is much more content and less

reliance on context. So, there is often a requirement for the local legal opinion to be interpreted for the answer/meaning to be understood [as it has low content].

"As a Brit, I noticed that my teammates from Australia and South Africa use their natural higher content approach of project managing lawyers because they are explicit and directive. For them it is implicit in relying on codes and precedents which is more my way."

"Maybe the approach to data by someone is a reflection of their culture's certainty /uncertainty and acceptance/avoidance tendency"

Based on these reflections, that mirrored the conclusions from existing research on expatriates, it was concluded that regional organisations should consider implementing cross-cultural awareness training as part of the induction process for all new joiners. More specifically, the participants strongly suggested that an introduction booklet to cross-culture in the workplace could be provided as part of the programme and rolled out to all colleagues and peers.

6.2.7 Cross Cultural Management and Decision-making

Using the national cultural model theories as a foundation, Table 5.1, the participants discussed decision-making in a cross-cultural context. The following selection of first-hand insights, especially their tone, revealed some of the challenges of managing and decision-making across cultural and in multi-cultural environments.

"Consensus and decision-making across cultures is hard because of the different ways of deciding, persuading et cetera"

"Striving for excellence is different across cultures, for example in Saudi Arabia they do not strive for excellence but rather they strive to improve their relationships as these are more important than tangible delivery of excellence."

"[there are many] corridor agreements in relationship cultures".

The participants' observations are neither exceptional nor unexpected as similar sentiments and conclusions have been expressed in the literature. What was noteworthy was the sense of catharsis and sharing that accompanied the group discussion about how each person was being challenged due to cross-cultural misunderstandings and diversities. The participant's cultural background was immaterial to their perceptions as every cultural background felt, in some way, to be in unfamiliar terrain. Participants from collectivist cultures felt that the organisational context comparatively individualistic and democratic, while those from individualistic backgrounds believed that the environment was very relationship based with hierarchies taking precedent over process. The observation that emerged from this discussion is that all participants acknowledged that working in cross and multicultural contexts increased their stress and anxiety due to the greater effort and difficulty of ensuring mutual understanding and communication.

An informal debate ensued around the order of influence and importance of the various cross-cultural dimensions (as detailed in the models). An informal consensus was reached that the biggest influences, in order of importance, affecting management and decision-making in cross-cultural contexts were power

distance and hierarchy; individual vs collectivist drivers; establishment of trust and then communication style (context vs content). Considering the four chosen dimensions, led to the remark that relationships were a common thread that joined individuals together and that each cultural dimension related to and influenced the connexions that developed between leaders and followers and individuals and their peers working in teams. Cross-cultural environments create barriers and challenges that hinder the establishment and effectiveness of workplace relationships .

The use of masculine and feminine in one of the dimensions led to a discussion regarding gender discrimination in the local situation. The female participants expressed the view that when gender discrimination was combined with high power distance it became a very difficult issue to address and was almost beyond the control to ameliorate. The following statements highlighted the concerns:

“for women in the Middle East this is a huge issue-when I meet a new contractor or supplier they seem to say to themselves -yes a woman we can dominate. They then get rather surprised by my behaviour.”

“Expats lower their gender behaviour [with respect to sexual discrimination and lewdness] to the local standards because they think they can get away with it”

The significance of gender was noted by the researcher and participants. However, gender discrimination was considered to be beyond the scope of this study, so was recommended for future research.

6.2.8 Ethical behaviour in cultural contexts

The group circled back to discuss how ethical behaviour may be affected due to cross-cultural differences and influences. The preceding week’s discussion had alluded to difference in ethics due to cultural backgrounds with this discussion being deeper and more specific as the participants had a greater insight into how cross-cultural differences manifested.

The participants started by discussing how expatriates working in a multicultural corporate context lacking explicit and enforced ethical standards, seem to have more opportunity to exploit loopholes. The frankness of the following statements and their implicit consequences for maintaining ethical standards in a cross-cultural context may come as a surprise to senior management or those not working in an expatriate context. However, for seasoned SIEs and assigned expatriates, these are perceptions relatively typical of what has been experienced and observed.

“In a multicultural environment, there is a degradation and decrease in one’s [original] cultural affinity and responsibility and so people can behave unethically and unteam like - people become mercenary.”

“Multicultural seems to bring up the worst of each culture”

“Unethical behaviour is also due to cross-cultural differences in perceptions of ethics.

“This discussion reflects the challenge of remaining ethical within a high-power distance relationship and under peer pressure.”

The difficulty of standing up to and challenging unethical behaviour when one is vulnerable such as a SIE in a high-power distance context was a real-life dilemma that the participants faced regularly. It was an emotionally sensitive topic as even though the participants were clearly aware of right and wrong, so they were also aware of the extent of the consequences that may occur should they speak truth to power. The internal challenge of finding an ethical pathway is clearly illustrated in the following interchange. At this stage of the program, the concept of moral disengagement had yet to be discussed as a model, and so the individuals were unaware of their rationalisation of their internal decisions and how this could be seen as misconstruing consequences and displacement of responsibility.

"Is bribery an absolute issue or are they just hiding behind ethical relativity. I think it is corrupt."

This comment was immediately followed by another participant who noted

"Even if it is socially accepted, that does not mean it is right, but it can't be challenged because of power distance and hierarchy issues."

The opinion was again raised that unethical tendencies and deeds were more likely when enforcement was uncertain, such as in the UAE. They felt that the perception exists at that due to weak enforcement of ethical standards and small consequences, their colleagues appeared to be taking more risks including acting unethically when in a group. The following statement reflected these concerns:

"So, the lack of structures and the [low] likelihood of the consequences emboldens the expats who then behave unethically."

"Expats behave as individuals but become mercenary in a group."

Many regional organisations have implemented anonymous whistleblowing hotlines as a tool to manage and monitor unethical behaviour. The services of an independent organisation have been procured for a monthly subscription so that the employees and/or the general public have a communication channel to raise concerns relating to ethical behaviour. The uptake and use of whistleblowing hotlines have been varied with approximately 5 to 7 complaints being raised per year in the case of the research organisation. The participants perceptions of whistleblowing, in a relationship-based society, were consistent with the existing literature (Burton, 2012 & Victor, 2017) as noted below.

"Whistleblowing in Arab cultures is unethical. Whistleblowing would go against the family and all your group. So, in a relationship based society it would be inappropriate to blow the whistle on somebody. The idea would be rather to find a way to work it out than to go to the authorities."

"don't air dirty laundry in public, sort it out in-house, save face"

These observations add weight to the challenge of establishing and enforcing ethical standards in a cross-cultural workplace. The additional effects of high-powered distance in relationship-based societies exacerbates the challenge due to a sense of disempowerment by the employees within the organisational structures

6.2.9 SIEs' Motivations

The fourth learning set focused on the participants experiences of being an expatriate in Dubai. The first topic of conversation centred on the participant's motivations for becoming SIEs. The participants' views corroborated the literature that identified SIEs as temporary economic visitors with a short-term focus who have expatriated for career and financial advancement with the intention of eventually returning to their home country (Thorn, 2009). The following statements illustrated the participants views.

"Expats are in the UAE because they earn more here than back home."

"Short termism and cashing in is the goal of the SIEs, so they are behaving in a self-interested way."

"Expatriates say that if it gets so bad, then I'll just get on a flight and leave-and this has happened previously, I've seen it and heard about it."

The discussion progressed and the insights from the preceding sessions relating to ethicality were overlaid onto the motivations for being a SIE. The first of the following statements alludes to the impact of impermanence on a SIE's ethicality. The participant has implicitly indicated that they would be placing themselves before the organisation when making decisions. The second statement was more explicit with participants clearly stating that they place their own interests before that of the organisation as part of their personal career development.

"As an expat, I know I'm not here on a permanent basis, it's always at the back of my mind. So, to decide to invest in myself or my organisation is real. Is my fiduciary duty to myself or to the organization?"

"It's hard to reconcile the incongruence between my person and organisation as an expat, which would be different if I was back home. So, I put my personal career before the organisation".

The participants also made note of the importance and effect of family commitments and support. The need to provide for one's family was viewed as intensifying the SIE motivations and when one's family were remote then SIEs would more readily lose their inhibitions and self-control:

"Behaviour as an expat is proportional to your dependents [wife and children]"

"Without family support, they [expats] become slightly feral."

These anecdotes set the tone for the rest of the learning set meeting as it was already patently obvious that the participants were aware of and acknowledged their self-interest biases and motivations towards their own career development and economic gains.

6.2.10 SIE adjustment

Throughout the preceding group meetings and discussions, the participants had repeatedly introduced the idea that they had, consciously and unconsciously, adjusted their behaviours, ethics and professional lives to fit in with the local work and social context. As previously explained, the literature review had been extended to include expatriate adjustment. Pires et al's (2006) model of expatriate adjustment was shared with the group which led to one of the most profound and significant moments of the entire program.

The adjustment model and its implications had the single biggest response and effect out of all the information shared across the LSMs. The immediate reaction was that all participants strongly and personally identified with the model and the adjustment process and that they had all adjusted and changed their behaviours and standards to accommodate and fit into the local work context. There was a significant lull in the conversation as they silently realised and inwardly reflected on how much and in what ways they had each changed from the professionals they were back home and the SIEs that they had become. These observations indicated deep conflicts within the participants as they became aware that they had compromised their original values by adjusting and accepting new ones.

Until that moment, each of the participants had believed that they were the only person suffering from the stresses and strains of being a SIE working in Dubai. Their perceptions of being unique in their struggle to adjust had unwittingly intensified their sense of isolation and aloneness as they had not thought it appropriate to share their thoughts and feelings with other SIEs. The model provided a commonality of shared experiences that led to a sense of belonging and stability within the group when they recognised that their issues and contexts were not unique but shared by all SIEs. The model also provided the participants with a tool and construct that helped them make sense of their previous and current emotional and anxiety fluctuations. The reflections on their adjustment journeys included the following:

"The longer I'm here I just accept the ways and do it. When I first joined I was more aware."

"[I] can't go back to my own country, so [I] just accept all sorts of things and integrate into the organization."

The dialogue continued and extended to an examination of the model's adjustment phases that suggested that at some point expatriates became functionally adjusted and stable, the mastery phase, with only minor ongoing changes. The majority of participants materially disagreed with that portrayal of the steady mastery phase. In their experiences, they had seemingly continually toggled back and forth between the acceptance of reality and adjustment phase. They reflected their experiences as follows:

"people may jump around – back and forth, the process is not linear"

"What I don't see here is that you may not complete the cycle, so you can get stuck and go backwards and forwards within the first two or three phases-without actually ever getting to a stable sense of adjustment and comfort".

It emerged that SIEs seemed to have experienced a continual sense of uncertainty and pressure that manifested throughout their time as an expatriate. It was suggested that a major negative expatriate related experience may cause a SIE to regress back to the culture shock phase even if they had been in the mastery phase. An event of sufficient trauma could cause an expatriate to have to significantly reconsider their understanding and views of how the local work environment operated. Examples included being threatened with non-renewal of the work permit, public confrontations with hierarchical managers or poor performance reviews. After the event, the expatriate would have to readjust, that is make their way back through the adjustment phase which would necessitate assimilating the new insights into reconfigured adaptations. Hence adjustment, in the participants' experience was not a once off but rather a continuing process of (re)adjustment as the SIE's awareness of the local context progressively deepens.

6.2.11 Perceived Organisational Support (POS)

The participants had indicated in previous discussions an intuitive appreciation that their experiences of the organisation's support and their relationship with their line manager as being related to their sense of belonging and security. Following a brief explanation of the perceived organisational support construct, the participants responded with a range of observations that included the following:

"I think the manager has huge, huge, huge responsibility for new joiners. I'd stay if my manager is good, and leave if he is not. It's a psychological contract that is being developed with most managers not being aware of this."

"[when] the SIE arrives and there is a huge and significant difference between the HR team's approach [during recruitment] and their line managers behaviour. This leads to a drop in POS and a negative perception of the organisation. This low POS at the start of work leads to directly jumping to culture shock (and so skipping the honeymoon phase)."

These observations demonstrated that the participants understood and identified with the POS concept and how it played out in a corporate context. Negative or weak leader-follower relationships were recognised as unintentionally eroding positive POS and hence follower commitment .

The reflections on the consequences of the lack of positive POS or the creation of negative perceptions are contained in the second statement. The participants with human resources backgrounds mentioned that the concept was poorly understood in their profession and especially by local management and executives. The effects of manager-follower relationship's on POS and the consequences for organisations was largely unknown. In addition, ignorance existed regarding how cross-cultural miscommunication undermined the establishment of positive POS. As the discussion developed, so other reflections on the consequences of a lack of positive POS came to light:

"POS is related to trust. When there is low POS then people are concerned about confidentiality and how ethically marginal issues will be dealt with."

"if POS/policy and decision-making is inconsistent, then people can feel unsupported and take shortcuts to just get to a result."

“So, linking POS to decision making, if an organisation is behind you, then you feel more confident to behave as would be expected – [that is] ethically.”

The message that is being expressed is that POS, trust and ethical decision making are mutually reinforcing and interrelated. The group reached consensus on the importance of POS as an important element in a SIE’s performance and self-perception.

They moved onto a deliberation on the effects of a lack of procedural justice. It was recognised that a formal and effective disciplinary process was an antecedent for the establishment of positive POS. The participants noted their experiences of the consequences of a lack of justice and recourse for unfair behaviour:

“Even if I do as I’m told to do and it subsequently goes wrong, then you are blamed by the hierarchy.”

“Even if I write a cover my arse email and put it on record to defuse my responsibility it doesn’t work because if they [the management] tell you to do it then they will ignore the email [at a later date]”

So, without an effective fair and equitable disciplinary and appeals process, positive POS is unlikely to be sustainable, and so SIEs would continue to feel insecure and vulnerable with the consequence being an increased potential for deviant and self-interested/self-preservation behaviour.

Following the fourth meeting and as the participants became more engaged in the problem, so it became apparent that they had intuitively and unconsciously been aware that they had been living with many of the challenges and stresses predicted in the literature. The camaraderie that progressively developed as part of the CI process enabled the participants to recognise that they are were not unique or alone - rather their challenges were quite typical of those experienced by the majority of SIEs. This reassurance was an unintended and unexpected positive outcome that supported the participants’ ongoing adjustment and organisational effectiveness.

6.2.12 UAE legal framework

It was recognised and acknowledged by the group on several occasions, that the linkage between the UAE’s labour and residency regulations and the enactment of the labour laws had led to both SIEs and assigned expatriates being exposed to the chronic stresses that arose from being required to sustain performance to ensure continued employment and permission to stay in the country. They noted, that in their experience, all of their expatriate colleagues and associates were aware of and affected by their temporary guest status.

“From the UAE perspective, your employment and residence is all dependent on your organisation. Though law has provisions, in reality it is not enforced. So, the UAE context has and leads to an increased vulnerability.”

“lack of employee rights and legal protection [is a contributing factor to stress]”

They added that the practice of having to pay a full year’s rent up front, as is common in the UAE, exacerbated their sense of unease and exposure.

“Newly arrived SIEs in the UAE typically pay one year’s rent upfront in full, so they are deeply financially tied in to making their job successful. We then hit rock bottom but can’t leave.”

"In addition, lease agreements in the UAE do not have break clauses and say somebody's fired the increased consequences is that they might end up having to still forfeit up to a year's lease which creates additional stress to retain one's job and employment."

These observations substantiated the premise that the UAE legal context was a significant catalyst and amplifier of the stresses being experienced by SIEs.

6.2.13 Job Insecurity

The fifth session homed in on job insecurity and how it could be either a positive motivator to avoid losing one's job or a source of lingering stress and anxiety. The former was seen as supporting performance with the latter creating a predisposition for adopting and accepting unethical behaviour to stay employed and avoiding repatriation. All of the participants had at some time faced job insecurity and three reflected on their experiences as follows:

"Dubai is a huge pressure cooker because if you lose your job you are kicked out [of the country]"

"In times of economic depression, SIEs do not want to repatriate and so will do everything they can to stay in their jobs by becoming more self-interested and self-protective. We do not want to leave our expatriate roles as there is less opportunity and work back home."

"Behaviourally he has gone native, to fit in to survive, he now can't [easily] repatriate."

The first statement highlighted the sense of overwhelming pressure that SIEs experienced to avoid becoming unemployed as losing one's job could lead to involuntary repatriation. This led on to the influence of future employability, the likelihood of being able to find another job (de Cuyper et al, 2009b), as being noted by several participants as a significant contributing factor to their risk and consequent assessment and predisposition to self-interest acts. Between 2005 and 2017, Dubai experienced at least two economic cycles that had led to mass job losses and repatriation of workers. The participants would have experienced at least one or more of these downturns and so were reflecting a broader expatriate perception of the self-interest necessity to avoid, at any cost, retrenchment during an economic slump. The professional job market in Dubai, compared to other large international cities, is relatively small at just several hundred thousand jobs. Dubai has ensured that it is perceived as an attractive career and work opportunity for SIEs and so the competition for jobs is particularly fierce. Placing the observations into the Dubai context, led to a deeper understanding of how SIEs job security in the "pressure cooker" of Dubai. It follows that SIEs would consider taking atypical actions to make certain of retaining their employment. This, conceivably, included compromising their ethics, following orders semi-blindly and/or taking decisions in their own self-interest.

An off-the-cuff remark noted that, in the Dubai context, *"POS is job security"*. This simple comment linked the importance of positive POS in ameliorating a SIE's anxiety and stress from job insecurity. When SIEs feel embedded, recognised and supported by the organisation then they are less likely to experience the immediate and consequential effects of job insecurity.

6.2.14 Moral Disengagement

Following the explanation of moral disengagement and its inner workings, the participants unanimously agreed that they had seen moral disengagement in action as SIEs. The following statements illustrate their immediate responses and experiences:

"I've seen all of these [moral disengagement] mechanisms being used [to rationalise immoral decisions]."

"[Ethical] Relativity is used far too often to justify behaviour - even when one knows what is absolutely right"

Often they would delegate the responsibility for managing the process that has ethical challenges and hence avoid direct accountability".

"If an organisation does not have solid codes of ethics and a very clear understanding of them, then this leads to interpretation [of what is ethical] and the space for moral disengagement to occur."

The second statement is an example of diffusion and displacement of responsibility to justify moral disengagement. The third statement referred back to the participants understanding of the importance of establishing ethical codes as a barrier to prevent moral disengagement flourishing. The discussion moved on to considering what contexts would favour moral disengagement recurring, with the following reflections being shared:

"If leaders and people at the top of an organisation are morally disengaged, then they push this down to their followers."

"If you can justify it to yourself then it's fine [to behave immorally], but it's a real challenge across and between departments."

Their observations related to the effect of leader-follower relations, peer pressure and intra-organisational competition as drivers for moral disengagement. The links between SIE adjustment, group and role ethics and moral disengagement are being alluded to by "if you can justify to yourself" sentiment expressed in the second statement. Furthermore, the participants have noted that ethics and ethical practices were not a universal constant across an organisation but are dependent on team norms and situational leadership.

The effects of SIE motivations, short termism and job insecurity that fostered self-interest were raised as contributing factors that enabled moral disengagement as illustrated in the following:

"Short termism views [of SIEs] rather than long-term views lets and leads to moral disengagement happening."

"Very low job insecurity and high embeddedness leads to reduction the ethics. But as a SIE who does not care I can always leave".

"Job insecurity is just one of the factors [leading to immoral behaviour], rather there are other ambitions and motivations leading to unethical behaviour."

"Job insecurity is one of, but not the main reason for moral disengagement and self-interest."

In response to the invitation to explore why SIEs accepted or permitted unethical decisions to be made, the participants highlighted the chronic effects of ethical fatigue and being worn down so that in the end they just gave up, reset their moral compasses and capitulated to the prevailing ethical practices. The first of the following statement links the long-term effects of anxiety arising from job insecurity to changes in ethicality integrity:

“job insecurity does/can lead to exhaustion and “why care?” [via moral disengagement] so leads to reduction in ethicality.”

“Not all individuals end up at unethical behaviour, some people stand up for the ethics and/but have the stress that they have to go through.”

“outside of a [legal] profession, people do get so tired and fatigued that they go along and give in”

The session came to a conclusion with the participants taking a few moments to deepen their thoughts, with some summarising the look-back on moral disengagement as follows:

“There is the difference of real-life and theoretical life. The reality is, if you want to do business in a place then you must accept the local ethics. But that does not permit you to cross lines but only to bend them - adapting to local conditions.”

“I have a line in the sand, but if it [the ethicality of the decision] is inside the line, but outside my own moral code, then I do it. I did it because I’m concerned for job security. I can accept it if it’s a decision made by someone else.”

“From a moral disengagement perspective - letting or making others make the unethical decision is in the grey zone it is “okay” and fine as I want to keep my job.”

“I don’t like it, but I rationalise it as I made my thoughts known and they made the decision.”

These concluding observations succinctly tied together the ethical dilemmas faced by SIEs when they encounter immoral behaviours and practices in the workplace. It appeared that it always came down to my job and my self-protection, that is my self-interest, being assessed and validated against the justifiability of diffused and displaced responsibility, diminishment of consequence and simple immoral justification. The sense that arose out of these concluding statements is one of disempowerment, inner turmoil and the inevitability of moral disengagement of SIEs when placed in that complex multi-faceted context.

6.3 Data Analysis Conclusions

The data analysis has revealed and explained the deeper implicit contextual meanings and implications of the participants reflections and observations on the research problem over the course of five learning set meetings. The choice of manual coding, rather than computer-based, combined with a thematic analysis has been validated as evidenced by the depth of interpretation and contextual understanding required to accurately draw out the messages and insights contained within the participants' statements and conversations.

The themes have been presented sequentially, in alignment with the learning set program, to mirror the participant's deepening of understanding and the emergence of their insights. Further reflection and examination of the themes, after the fifth group meeting, led to the recognition that the themes could be re-ordered and assembled into five overarching sets of drivers that affect SIE self-interest biases and influence organisational decision-making.

The five sets and with their constituent themes that emerged were

Organisational Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision making and biases• Moral Disengagement
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethical Awareness and Training• Role, Situational, Group and Organisational Ethics• Ethical leadership• Adjustment of Ethical standards
Cross Cultural issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of cross-cultural models and theories• Cross cultural Management and Decision-making• Ethical behaviour in cross cultural contexts
SIE motivations and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SIE Motivations• SIE adjustment• Perceived Organisational Support• Job Insecurity
UAE legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Linkage between labour and residential laws

The next step, as per the recommendation of thematic analysis guidance, was to identify and define the connections and interactions between the sets and themes. The aim being to generate an overall cohesive narrative and explanation for how the sets and themes related to and informed the research problem. TA guidance suggested developing a cognitive or process map that could model and illustrate how the issues interacted and intertwined. The next chapter presents the map that evolved and became a model to describe SIE self-interest biases in a Dubai context.

7 Self-Interest model with pathways and barriers

One of the research objectives was to develop a model to describe how SIE self-interest manifests and effects decision making. The challenge that emerged was how to assemble the interrelated but disparate sets and themes into antecedents and consequences as part of an overall and logically coherent flow. The thematic analysis process suggested using cognitive mapping as a tool to develop an interconnected diagram of the sets and themes. To be considered functional, the thematic map would have to deliver a coherent narrative and framework that explained the data in relation to the research question (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Braun & Clarke, 2006, Busch et al, 2005).

While reflecting on the sets and themes, a moment of clarity lead to the crystallisation of a skeleton for the data's thematic map. Over several iterations a diagram gradually evolved as it was progressively refined and simplified. Following Braun & Clarke (2006), the model was distilled down until the themes were coherent, distinct and avoided overlap such that a unifying narrative was found. The outcome was a diagram that bound and related all the issues into a logical and chronological order. The model's chronology started with the local context before the arrival of a SIE, moved through their arrival and adjustment phases, and onto the complex emergence of self-interest that enabled biased decision making due to moral disengagement.

The model became the final element of the thematic analysis as it provided a vehicle for understanding and explaining the research problem and proposing interventions. This chapter describes the logic and interactions of the SIE self-interest model (SIESIM), and how it could be used to avoid and mitigate SIE self-interest. The full SIESIM is presented in Figure 7.7 on page 86 and it is suggested that the diagram is reviewed before continuing on to the following sections. An initial review will provide an appreciation of the overall structure of the model and provide a framework for the following sections that go into the details and interactions of each of the model's component parts before arriving at the synthesis of the full model.

7.1 SIE self-interest model

As discussed in the conclusion to the data analysis section, the fourteen themes were grouped into five overarching sets. The sets and themes have been arranged horizontally in the model like geological strata that get progressively laid down and build on each other. Each theme is mutually reinforcing and cumulative in effect. Time has been factored into the model as a dimension that flows horizontally from left to right across four columns. The model starts on the left with the pre-existing local conditions and moves through the sequential phases of a SIE arriving and experiencing culture shock, adjusting and changing over time and as a result becoming self-interested and self-protective which creates the antecedents for moral disengagement.

The adjustment that phases in over time and the themes have been combined in the model as warp and weft of the underlying fabric as illustrated in Figure 7.1. The visualisation of the themes being interwoven with each other across time is intended to create an image of a tapestry made up of different threads or themes. The phases are analogous to the chronological time dependent SIE adjustment as warp which supports and creates a framing for the themes, as weft, to be moved interwoven and integrated to form a model of adjustment and consequence. The visualisation of the interwoven themes interacting across time is intended to create an image of a tapestry made up of different threads or themes

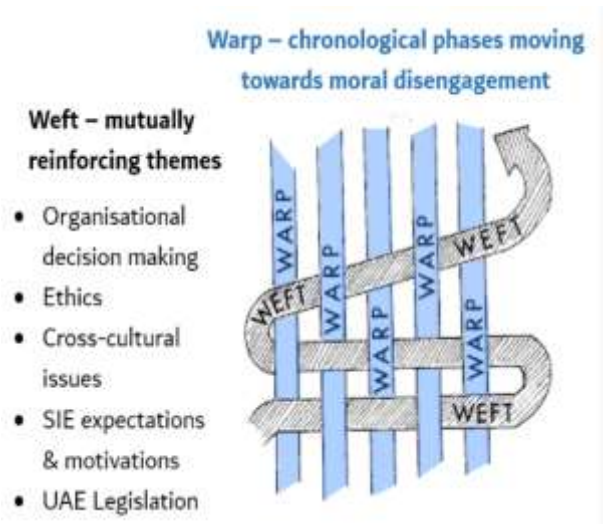


Figure 7.1: Structure of the SIESEM with the Warp as the phases and the Weft as interwoven themes

The five sets (see page 74) that emerged from the data analysis are presented below to the left with the themes paraphrased into single sentences. The diagrammatic arrows, adjacent to the right of each of the five sets, are from the SIESIM model and illustrate how the sets and themes are portrayed in the model. Arrows have been intentionally chosen to convey the idea that the themes are dynamic and act as vectors that take effect over time by gradually and chronologically nudging a SIE along pathways towards moral disengagement. Each vector contains a summary of the core concept of each theme as realised from the learning sets and data analysis.

Organisational decision making: Decision-making in a corporate context is, in general, demonstrably prone to biases & self-interest

Org. decision making prone to biases & self interest

Ethics: Ethical standards and application of ethics is not absolute, but rather relative and variable;

Ethics are not absolute, but instead relative and variable

Cross-cultural issues: Cross-cultural environments stimulate unintended organisational challenges & complications;

Challenges of Cross-cultural environments

SIE expectations & motivations: Professionals who expatriated have short term expectations of career & wealth but underestimate the effects of social adjustment & family commitments

Professional considering working abroad as SIE

UAE Legislation: UAE's interlinked labour and residential legislation precipitates chronic insecurity.

UAE Laws (incl. Labour & Residential)

The gradual adjustment and process of influence of SIEs towards the manifestation of moral disengagement takes place over time and is represented as a chronological flow of four phases. The sequential phases are presented as a flow from left to right as illustrated in Figure 7.2.

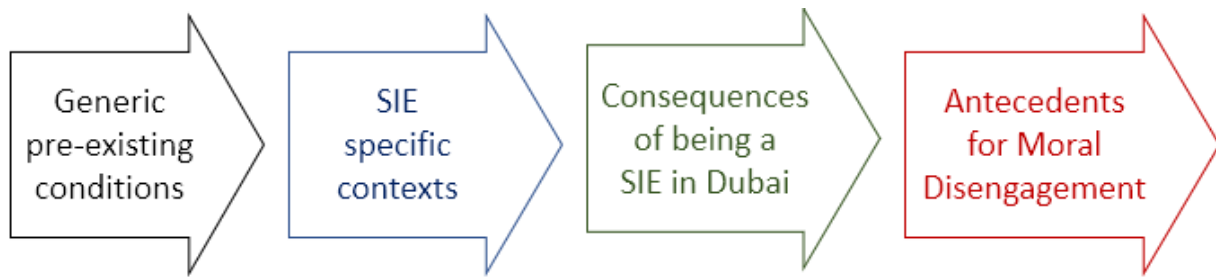


Figure 7.2: SIE phases of change and adjustment from arrival moving towards moral disengagement

The first phase chronologically is termed “Generic pre-existing conditions and is positioned on the left. Generic has been chosen to indicate that these conditions are independent of the organisational context and are considered to be commonplace in the local context. Pre-existing indicates that they exist before a SIE arrives to Dubai and as such are a starting point for all SIEs. The generic pre-existing conditions encompass organisational, social and legal settings that are typical of the local work contexts.

When a SIE decides to come and work in Dubai, these generic pre-existing conditions move on to and transmute into a set of “SIE Specific Contexts” (2nd column). Over time, the specific local and organisational working contexts lead the SIE to culture shock which is followed by adjustment and adaption. The outcome of the adjustment includes a range of changes in values and perceptions that have been grouped under the third column and titled “Consequences for being a SIE in Dubai”. The fourth stage occurs during the mastery phase when the SIE’s professional and personal transformations transmute into and become antecedents for moral disengagement. Moral disengagement maybe activated from a single or combination of multiple triggers that then leads to internal justified decision-making that has entrained self-interest and other biases.

The following sections build on from and use the data analysis explanation as the foundation to explain the origins of the thematic analysis model and the interactions of the themes.

7.1.1 Organisational decision making prone to self-interest biases

The consensus reached in the LSMs, and corroborated by literature, was that organisational decision-making is commonly prone to various biases of which loss aversion and self-interest are particularly present for SIEs. Figure 7.3 contains the phased flow of how a SIE working in Dubai could become increasingly inclined towards moral disengagement during decision making.

The general pre-existing condition for organisational decision making in Dubai is depicted as the black box in Figure 7.3. Many Dubai businesses are between the entrepreneurial and corporatizing phase so that decision-making processes are neither formalised nor have formal reviews or checking procedures (Flamholtz

& Randle, 2007). The status quo is that decision making lacks the support of policies and processes and so is open to the entrainment of biases and self-interest tendencies.

A SIE arriving into and being employed in Dubai will encounter organisational decision making processes that are initially unfamiliar, foreign plus may appear to be influenced by and based on organisational, team and national cultural norms (blue box). Decision-making under these circumstances is often informal and based on the leaderships' or team's chosen approach or precedents. The participants noted that decision-making processes varied between and across organisations, teams, managers and across cultures.



Figure 7.3: Changes over time in the organisational decision making of SIEs

The consequences for a SIE coming into this context are that the informality, unpredictability and uncertainty of how decisions are taken creates opportunities for biases (green box). As the SIE further adjusts and normalises their standards, so self-interest may arise and be entrained, both consciously and unconsciously, into decision-making via moral disengagement mechanisms (red box). The participants confirmed that they had experienced situations where moral disengagement had clearly been active. For example, short termism which externalised the consequences of decisions to later years and cases of displacement and diffusion of responsibility included observations of employees saying that they made the decision because “they told me to, the group decided and/or it’s the way we do it here.”

It was acknowledged that not all decisions taken by SIEs are biased. However, the lack of codification and checking of decision-making combined with the unfamiliar environment appears to have failed to curtail the emergence of self-interest biases. The flow and force of a SIE’s self-interest opportunities and predisposition increases bit by bit as they adjust and accommodate the local conditions. In this type of context these biases have an unintentionally fertile breeding ground in which to take root and blossom.

7.1.2 Ethics and (un)Ethical Behaviour

Organisational and corporate ethics was recognised as lacking absolute standards, with organisational ethics being viewed as relative and variable. Ethics and morality, as practiced in the personal and professional contexts encountered by SIEs, have been shown by research and substantiated by the participants, to be influenced by situational, group, leadership and role dependent factors. Following a similar logic to Figure 7.3, this leads to the cascade of ethicality as per Figure 7.4.



Figure 7.4: Ethical adjustment and adaption of SIEs

The consequences for a SIEs' ethical standards and behaviour was that they are influenced by organisational and group pressure which led to cognitive dissonance and stress to maintain one's own ethicality and moral compass. It appeared that there was no incentive to be more ethical than one's peers, but rather to be as unethical as the person next to you. This can be viewed as a socialisation of ethicality that was being driven by the lack of any perceived value in being more ethical in a context disturbed by personal self-interest and Machiavellian. In addition, being ethical was reportedly viewed as potentially disruptive and uncompetitive. Over time, due to ethical fading, fatigue and adjustment, a SIE's ethical compass setting has been shown to shift and potentially come to rest at group's lowest common minimum ethical standard.

Supporting the fading of ethics were the observations that within a large proportion of Dubai based organisations, ethics was not part of a formal training or induction program. Perhaps this was based on the false assumption that SIEs as international professionals know how to and will behave "ethically" and be able to distinguish between ethical and immoral behaviour. Illustrating this was the collective moment of reflection during which the participants recognised that their preconceived ideas (that all people have similar ethical perspectives even though they come from different cultural and professional backgrounds) was inaccurate. This supported the existence of a potential wide gap between assumptions and realities as the participants were all experienced managers and professionals.

The participants pointed to SIEs, on occasion, having deliberately acted unethically because they had known the local culture was "forgiving and silent" to avoid public embarrassment. SIEs may be seen to be consciously having taken advantage of the decrease in-group ethics, which was facilitated by intra-group collusion, the low likelihood of being caught and/or having to face significant consequences. An unintended consequence of the cultural reluctance to losing face was that organisations neither failed to learn lessons nor implemented the necessary changes required to prevent unethical behaviour. It appeared that organisational learning in relationship-based contexts was less effective, especially when the learning had to do with unethical behaviour or pointed to management/individual failures. In these circumstances, the social pain of admitting fault and embarrassment was too much and hence the lessons were not being learnt and so SIEs were able to take advantage of the context and reoffend.

In addition, using the phase of ethical adjustment of SIEs as a backdrop, it was noteworthy that as international workplaces have become increasingly multicultural, so the model suggests a strong indication that unethical group norms could emerge within multicultural teams made up of SIEs and other categories of employees with SIE tendencies. The outcome for multicultural contexts appears to predict that, without sustained and concerted leadership and ethical standards, group and individual ethics will shift, adapt and drop towards the lowest common denominator – “a race to the bottom.”

7.1.3 Challenges and influences of Cross-cultural environments

The effects of ethical degradation were not acting in isolation from the other pressures facing SIEs. Instead, prevailing organisation decision making patterns in conjunction with ethical shifts were being exacerbated by the cross and multi-cultural context encountered by the SIE. Figure 7.5 illustrates the interactions of ethical relativity with decision-making overlaid onto the challenges and consequences of working in cross-cultural contexts.

The participants’ observations indicated that SIEs are never completely familiar with, competent or effective in their new cross and multicultural spaces. SIEs were continually, both consciously and unconsciously, trying to take account of cultural differences even as they adjusted and become more cross-culturally competent. These themes were seen as being ever present and interacting concurrently with the result that they could unintentionally and unnoticeably become a mutually reinforcing vicious cycle (Masuch, 1985).



Figure 7.5: Interaction of ethics and cross-cultural issues with and on SIE decision-making

People working in a homogeneous or formalised cultural context have comparatively less opportunity for interpretation and flexing of the rules and processes as there are clearly understood boundaries based on social and group consensus. In contrast it was observed that in a multicultural context, that lacked explicit and enforced ethical standards, there was more opportunity to exploit loopholes and use the excuse of

cultural ethical differences to justify immoral behaviour. This scenario was exacerbated when enforcement was uncertain, or the consequences seemed to be slight which led to increased risk taking and unethical action. The pattern that emerged was of SIEs' being gradually negatively influenced and adjusting to the fluidity of their cross-cultural context's perceptions on ethics and decision-making. The end result was observed to have led to this type of environment unwittingly having fostered and reinforcing the antecedents for ethical fading and moral disengagement.

In this situation, formal cross-cultural training for SIEs would be extremely beneficial as it would transform any implicit and intuitive knowledge into explicit understanding of the expected ethical standards and practices. Cross-cultural training would also reduce the SIE's sense of foreignness and misunderstanding plus speed up their adjustment process.

7.1.4 Realities and unintended consequences of being a SIE in the UAE

SIEs arriving into the host country, typically have the preconception that their stay will only be temporary. In parallel, they were mostly motivated by career and financial advancement. The participants observed that SIEs appeared to have underestimated the challenges of forming a stable and supportive base and the chronic effects of having to continually adjust and readjust to adapt to their new context. Integrating the final three of the sets of themes led to Figure 7.6 which presents a series of potential pathways for SIEs in the Dubai context to gradually adjust and move towards moral disengagement. The cumulative interactions and effects of adjustment and norming arise from the combination of the need to come to terms with cross cultural barriers, new social milieus that lack active social support and family demands and commitments. There are difficulties of establishing supportive relationships with line managers and peers due to the challenges of multicultural environments. On top of these, there is the additional work pressures and anxieties provoked by the UAE legislative framework which all combine into another vicious mutually reinforcing cycle.

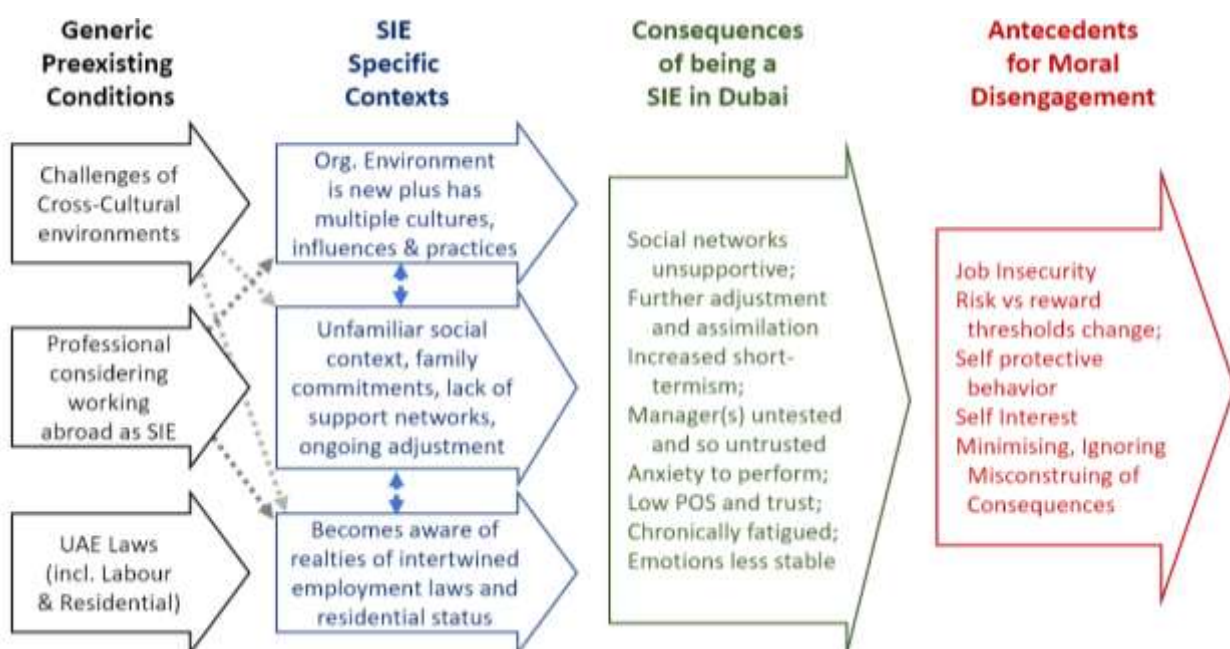


Figure 7.6: Contexts and Consequences of being a SIE in UAE as antecedents to moral disengagement

Focusing in on the SIE's social situation, led to the observations that they often experienced a decrease in supportive networks and resources coupled with increases in family pressures and commitments (emotional and financial) from in-country and home country dependents. On top of these personal stressors, the average SIE only became fully aware of the ramifications of the UAE legislation and common practices through shared anecdotes and personal experience. In the UAE, residential status is linked to employment status, both which are renewed biennially. This process can trigger two cycles of increased anxiety followed by intense relief if the work contract and visa are renewed. In addition, the common practice of paying a year's rent in advance is an added and unexpected burden as cash reserves are very limited on arrival. These general pre-existing conditions (bottom black arrow in Figure 7.6) come together to create a specific and unique situation for UAE based SIEs (bottom blue arrow).

SIE adjustment was observed to be a significant issue that is ongoing with repeated cycling back and forth between the culture shock, adjustment and mastering phases – rather than a steady movement to a sense of stability. The reported inability, to never completely adjust and settle, added to the SIE's accumulating personal and professional stressors - all of which were seen to be exacerbating their background anxiety and overall sense of insecurity. This confluence of conditions led to a SIE simultaneously having to deal with personal pressures resulting from new and unfamiliar social environments on top of the different cultural, legal and organisational contexts. The outcome and consequence (contained in the green arrow) was observed to result in the SIE perceiving their social networks as relatively unsupportive and ineffective which stimulated a circumstantial sense of vulnerability which in turn influenced their overall sense of well-being and satisfaction.

Pressure to perform and the resulting anxiety was reported to be more intensified for SIEs with family commitments and in country dependents. Family breadwinners had an urgency to retain their jobs and hence were seen to more readily conform to the prevailing situational norms for self-interest and security.

It was noted, that as a SIE moves up the corporate ladder, so the competition for jobs increases due to the scarcity in the relatively small market of Dubai. This further increased the pressures on senior personnel who were conceivably willing to retain their jobs by whatever measures due to the fear of becoming unemployed in a tight labour market. It followed that SIEs, under these circumstances, would take atypical actions to ensure retention of their employment. Their actions may plausibly include compromising on ethics, following orders semi-blindly and/or taking decisions in their own self-interest for self-preservation.

Concurrent with the increased social pressures, a SIE is also exposed to the experiences of their new organisational circumstances with managers and leaders who were initially untested and untrusted. Managers and leaders were seen as the proxy and representatives of the anthropomorphized organisation with whom the SIE would try to build their bond and establish trust in the organisation. The initially weak manager-follower relationship may improve if the manager and follower built a solid and trusting connection. However, when the manager and follower came from different cultures, as is very common, then the

challenge of cross-cultural trust building and communications was likely to hamper the establishment of a positive bond and connection. Dubai based managers, as noted by participants, are seemingly unaware of the importance that behaviour plays in the SIE's establishment of trust in their new role and organisation. It appeared that, more often than not, local managers hampered the development of positive POS and inadvertently created the circumstances for a negative POS to grow.

The effect of the manager-follower relationship on POS was observed to be especially important during the initial 3-6 months when the new joiners were still forming their perspectives. It was noted, that SIEs often only become aware during their probation period, that is after they had arrived in Dubai, that an employee could be terminated without cause and with immediate effect. During this crucial period, SIEs commonly had increased expectations of their managers and the organisation to behave in a supportive manner. However, evidence suggested that organisations in Dubai, compared to Europe, often lacked effective on-boarding and induction programs to support the new joiners.

The market expectation for professional SIEs, as they get high salaries, is that they start performing and contributing from the very first day in the office. SIEs were perceived to be plug-and-play and low maintenance with organisations often taking a sink-or-swim attitude. This behaviour demonstrated the level of misunderstanding or ignorance of the crucial role that managers and leaders need to play in the development of an employee's positive POS. The research indicated, and the participants corroborated, that the initial on-boarding and adjustment phase for SIEs is a particularly sensitive and important period that organisations were failing to prioritize and resource. During this period, it was concluded that SIEs needed as much, and perhaps even more, active and sustained organisational and leadership support to make sense of their surroundings and so make a positive and constructive adjustment to the local conditions.

Organisational and procedural justice, which was an expected minimum from a Western perspective, was seen to be undermined by relationship-based social networks, power distance relationships and hierarchical managers. When unequal procedural justice occurred, an employee who may have been simply following line management instructions, could still have the concern that due to weak organisational procedural justice they could be made to take the blame if the decision went wrong. As organisational justice was noted as a key antecedent to ensuring the establishment of positive POS, so this typical scenario was considered to increase the propensity for insecurity to surface.

The data analysis indicated that a SIE's risk and consequent perceptions changed and shifted over time from those of their home country to in-country contexts. One of the circumstances that led to rapid and material changes occurred when a SIE came to realise that the worst that can happen from intentionally behaving unethically was to get fired and return home. The consequence of forced repatriation was then weighed against the low likelihood of being caught in an under regulated setting. This was combined with the low likelihood of being challenged or disciplined and the even lower probability of being found guilty (if disciplined). Added to this, was the factor that in a relationship-based culture as evident in Dubai, it is

inappropriate and illegal to name and shame in public and hence the SIE would most probably be quietly let go. It was foreseen that SIEs could mitigate any long-term negative consequences by, on arriving back home, they could merely make an excuse and tell a white lie as to why they left their job and thus avoid negative repercussions for their career. Finally, even in the unlikely event that a SIE did get caught and was successfully prosecuted, then the downside of any career limiting consequences were still seen as being fairly low. A SIE faced by this this scenario would simply repatriate with a very small, if any, dent in his/her career while having come up trumps with regard to personal gain from unethical behaviour. In this way, a SIE's risk versus reward assessments and internal justifications for unethical behaviour were be changed, shifted and adapted to the local realities which was noted to be a form of moral disengagement.

The participants also voiced their concern that SIEs gradually and progressively became chronically fatigued and less emotional stable. Stress overload, the lack of work-life balance, fuelled by the anxiety and pressure to perform plus cycling through adjustment combined to form a self-perpetuating cycle which led to lower stamina and energy reserves. These factors were observed to be additional antecedents for moral disengagement which are also unwittingly reinforcing the need for self-protective behaviour.

The research data suggested that as a SIE's awareness of their actual context grows, with its informality and blurred edges, so they were more prone and susceptible to ethical fading and moral disengagement due to the accumulation of the stressors and nudges. It appeared that SIEs progressively become primed for self-interest biases that, both consciously and unconsciously, increasingly manifested as their morality was gradually disengaged. The gradual degradation of ethics casts doubts on the ethicality of SIEs working in multicultural environments.

In summary, the combination of circumstances faced by SIEs in Dubai and their consequences led to the view that the potential for an organisation and its management being perceived as unsupportive and untrustworthy was increased in informal, unincorporated cross cultural working environments. This scenario was seen to contribute to SIE's increased job insecurity, self-interest, short-termism and self-protective behaviour, which in turn became antecedents for unethical behaviour via moral disengagement.

7.1.5 SIE's moral disengagement enabling biased decision making

Combining and overlaying the consequences of being a SIE in Dubai (Figure 7.6) with the interaction of ethics and cross-cultural issues of SIE decision-making (Figure 7.5) produced the full SIE self-interest model (SIESIM) (see Figure 7.7 overleaf) which was the completed thematic analysis map.

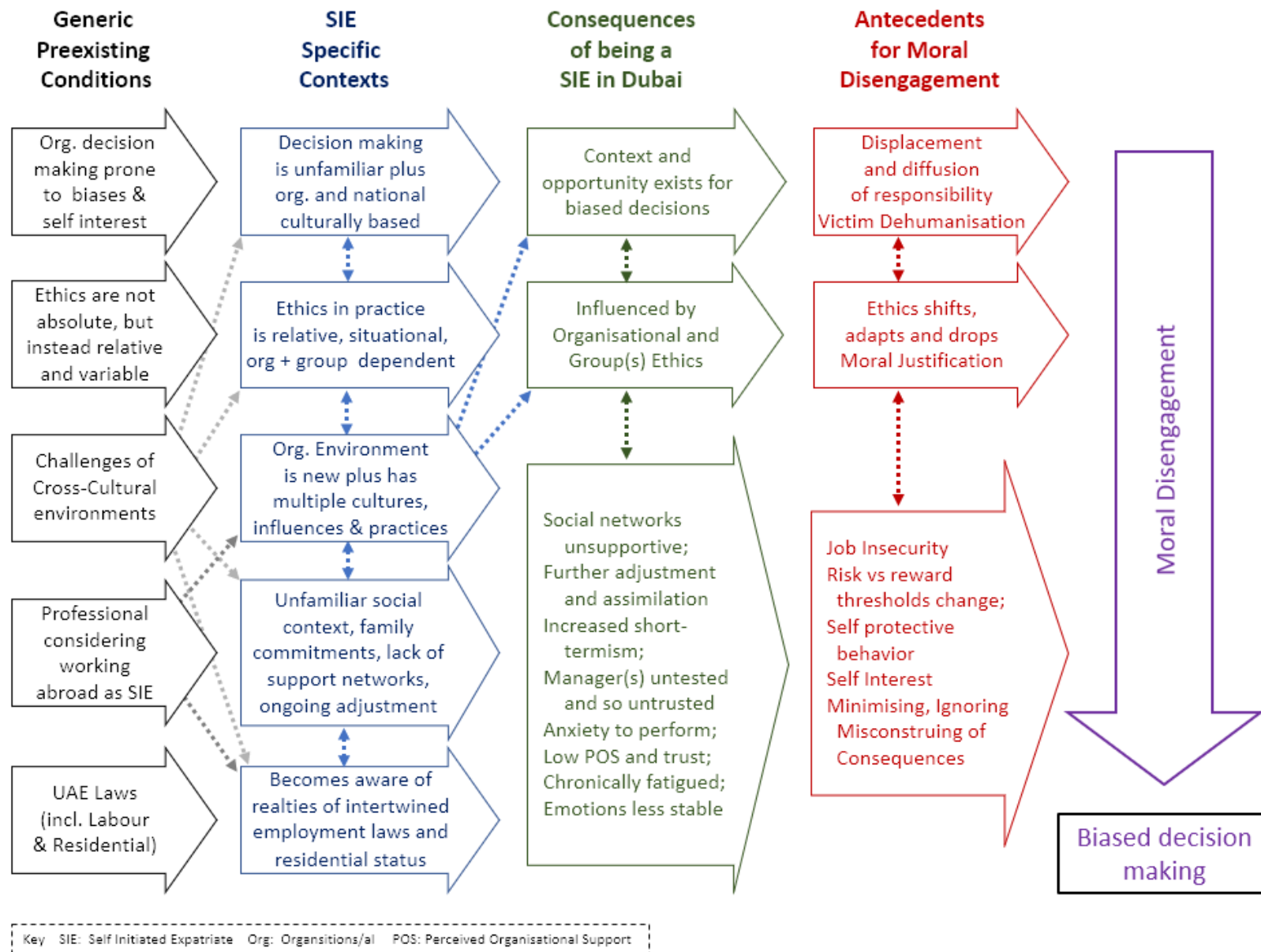


Figure 7.7: SIE self-interest model (SIESIM) leading to moral disengagement and biased decision making

The SIESIM is an illustration of the potential pathways and mechanisms for SIE self-interest to arise and lead progressively over time towards moral disengagement and biased decision making. The pathways are seen to be working and exerting their influences concurrently and are mutually reinforcing as a complex network. The consequences of being a SIE (green boxes) in a workplace with variable ethics (blue boxes) is shown to influence perceptions of the professional and social environments and vice versa. Similarly, the personal antecedents for moral disengagement (red boxes) impact on the SIE's behaviour in their workplace as an added vicious cycle.

The model has placed cross-cultural issues and challenges at its centre as these issues were seen to be an all-pervading factor that affected every aspect of a SIE's work and personal life. Some of the cross cultural impacts were more overt and readily apparent, for example, the obvious deference to hierarchy in the UAE workplace. However, like an iceberg, most of the cross cultural influences appeared to operate as an unconscious backdrop that significantly influenced SIE and negatively affected their constructive adjust and sense making of their new and different context.

The model is not suggesting that all SIEs will move from left to right in a linear manner and end up morally disengaged leading to biased and self-interested decisions. Rather, the model aims to provide a visual representation of the possible pathways that link the general pre-existing conditions to a SIE's specific context in Dubai that then flow towards and become antecedents for moral disengagement and consequential biases. It would be absurd to suggest that all SIEs would be powerless to prevent themselves from becoming disenfranchised and morally bankrupt.

Instead, the model depicts a unified and integrated map of pathways and tributaries that when combined could cumulatively nudge and predispose a SIE towards moral disengagement. The visual representation provides a simple tool to support the understanding and explanation of how the disparate factors interact to mutually reinforce and so contribute to a SIE's progressively increasing self-interest and self-protection tendencies. The insights and conclusions that arise from this interpretation of the model, is that in order to, as far as reasonably practicable, reduce a SIE's predisposition to move from left to right, an organisation needs to act to stem the flow of each and every pathway. Addressing some but not all of the pathways would still leave SIEs vulnerable to the other pressures they experience in the social work contexts.

A further observation is that when a SIE has an intention, for whatever reason, to behave immorally then it is likely that they will follow one of these pathways. For example, they could abuse the organisation's informal decision-making processes, manipulate hierarchical and cultural context, purposefully lower their ethical standards to the bottom rung or simply blame the organisation for their own behaviour. The model suggests in this circumstance that the vectors join the pre-existing conditions to likely misbehaviour patterns. These pathways could be disempowered and rendered less or inactive by establishing organisational policies, procedures and management practices that sever each pathway or vector.

The data analysis noted that some SIEs appeared to be actively and consciously using the weak decision-making systems combined with the lack of implemented and enforced ethical controls to their own nefarious advantage. They either euphemistically rationalised their unethical behaviour based on a biased risk-reward assessment or externalised the consequences to the victim, in this case the organisation. Furthermore, the consequences of decisions with long-term implications were understood to only materialise after the SIE had left the company and returned home as noted in the following statement.

“People make decisions in this region with/from a perspective that they’ll be gone in five years. People are self-interested and externalising issues and consequences.”

This is another example of how SIEs use the mechanisms of moral disengagement to rationalise immoral behaviour and short termism. This type of behaviour has implications for an organisation’s long-term planning and sustainability. It appeared that SIEs, and more generally perhaps all term contractors, do not have incentives to take the hard decisions of delayed short-term performance for future success.

Another process, reportedly employed by senior SIEs, is to screen and distance themselves from unethical behaviour. The practice was to delegate potentially unethical tasks to subordinates which is again a form of diffused responsibility. In a high-power distance relationship, a subordinate would have to carry out the instructions and over-ride their professional moral compass, or face censure, which was observed to lead to personal cognitive dissonance. These scenarios induced chronic stress and anxiety in SIEs which led, via a longer pathway, to fatigue, dissatisfaction and ultimately to giving in by choosing survival over morality.

The model illustrates how the crossover and interconnection of workplace, personal and social consequences unwittingly created the antecedents for moral disengagement which then led to an environment that failed to prevent biased decision-making. In addition, based on the SIEs personal situation and perception of organisational support, there is also the suggestion that SIEs could be susceptible to self-interest and biased decision-making without necessarily engaging any moral disengagement mechanisms. The combined pressures of job insecurity, family commitments and the need for self-protective behaviour could be so overwhelming that self-interest biases are the simple and singular driving factor for dishonest and self-centred behaviour.

Finally, the representation of these multiple interactions as a model goes some way to providing a visualisation of the complex nature of the overall problem and its internal interactions. However, it is noted that, the model is not (and could never be) a complete and comprehensive portrayal of all aspects of the problem of self-initiated expatriates’ self-interest biases. The SIESIM has been presented and is proposed as a starting point for understanding the internal dynamics with the view for future testing and development.

7.2 Interventions and application of the model to address SIE self-interest biases

The SIESIM provided a simplified illustration of the driving forces and factors that lead to SIEs having more propensity for self-interest. Each arrow is a vector and pathway that linked an antecedent to a subsequent consequence and outcome. The SIESIM supported the realisation that an organisation would be able to inhibit and reduce SIEs' self-interest biases if it identified and then cut or inhibited each arrow by placing barriers across its path.

Extending the analogy, each barrier would take the form of an organisational intervention and or development and implementation of a system or process. The range of barriers could include development and implementation of decision-making and ethical policies and procedures; awareness, training and professional development or the monitoring of performance and behaviour. By employing this approach in a logical manner, an organisation could develop a coordinated and comprehensive program of initiatives, interventions and developments that acknowledges and pre-emptively counteracts SIEs' self-interest tendencies. An example of such an organisational program of interventions and actions to proactively prevent SIE's self-interest biases arising is shown in Table 7.1 and discussed below.

Table 7.1: Sample Organisational Development Program to reduce and inhibit SIE Self Interest biases

	Corporate Policies and Materials	Implementation and Training	Monitoring
Organisational Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Decision-Making procedure with delegated authorities, reviews and look backs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training program for effective decision making with modules related to managerial roles. Program includes information on biases and conflicts of interest. Teams trained for internal reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic reviews and assessments of decisions. Reviews for conflicts of interest
Workplace Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical policy and codes of practice Disciplinary procedures Whistle blower facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical behaviour and standards training program. Modules graduated to managerial and leadership roles. Program covers relative ethics, cross cultural perspectives, ethical dilemmas, moral disengagement and ethical fading. Refresher annually with competence check 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical survey Investigations of ethical cases from ethical/ whistle blower hot line Disciplinary actions
Cross Cultural Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity and non-discrimination policy Distribution of "The Culture Map" Meyer, 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross cultural awareness session included in new joiner induction. Annual team builds and awareness programs for all personnel. Access to a cross cultural expert and champion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations into issues raised from ethical/ whistle blower hot line Feedback from appraisals
Expatriate expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIE Handbook Introduction booklet Employment contracts, terms and conditions in simple English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment contracts (with T&Cs) provided to SIEs as part of employment offer (i.e. before arriving in Dubai) Buddy system to pair new joiners with experienced SIEs Coaching available for new SIEs Monthly networking and support sessions for SIEs and their families Access to SIE champion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly (for the first 6 months) and then quarterly check-in meetings to discuss adjustment Feedback from line managers and coaches

	Corporate Policies and Materials	Implementation and Training	Monitoring
Organisational Culture and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for managers and leaders on POS and Cross-cultural Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> POS awareness sessions for supervisors, managers and leadership team Management coaching program Monthly seminars to raise awareness of issues underlying POS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 360° performance appraisals. Managers receive feedback from peers/subordinates on POS issues
Dubai and UAE context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factsheet for living and working in Dubai Dubai Guides for Expatriates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on Dubai provided to all new joiners before arrival in UAE On arrival – awareness session with experienced SIE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction checklist Review of adjustment after 6-months

Firstly, in the context of decision-making, as an organisation corporatizes, so it should progressively develop and implement decision-making management processes supported by formal training programs. The management processes should include prescribed process flows for decision-making with escalation for decisions of greater significance, delegation of authority and guidelines to avoid conflicts of interest. Best practice includes developing templates for assessing decisions with criteria to avoid (or at least minimise) biases and short termism. Decision-making processes should be implemented which include peer and gateway reviews. In addition, companies should consider regular reviews and look backs of decisions and their outcomes to institutionalise organisational learning.

Establishing and maintaining an ethical culture and leadership has been shown to support ethical practices. Ethical leadership should be reinforced with ethical codes of practice that are implemented as part of comprehensive ethical training programs. A training needs analysis should be completed to identify the target audiences across all levels and functions with an emphasis on induction and regular retraining of high-risk teams. Best practice for ethical programs includes establishing channels for whistleblowing and confidential reporting, documenting ethical values, codes & practices and setting ethical goals (Robertson & Athanassiou, 2009, Sekerka, 2009 and Langlois & Lapointe, 2010).

The ethical training program could also take into account different learning styles by using a mixture of on-line modules, face to face training, group exercises and coaching covering ethical codes, ethical dilemmas and case studies. Ethical performance should be checked using ethical surveys and investigating cases of immoral behaviour leading to, if relevant, disciplinary actions. An ethical training program can never completely prevent and erase all unethical behaviour, but a comprehensive and sustained program does deter unethical behaviour and support employees maintaining their moral compasses.

Cross-cultural sensitisation and training are key ingredients to support a SIE's social and professional adjustment and performance. Organisations should be providing both new-joiners and existing employees with cross-cultural training that includes components relating to cross-cultural ethics. A programme blending the theories of Hofstede (2011), GLOBE (House et al, 2004) and Meyer (2014a) would provide a solid platform for employees to grasp the basics of what it means to live and work in a cross-cultural milieu. At the very

least, a simple and cost-effective action would be to provide new joiners with a copy of Meyer's book "The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business" as part of an induction pack. Organisations should also make use of the programs and services that are readily available in various forms from the management consulting sector. Courses and programs range from half day to multi-day covering the full range of cross and multicultural theory and best practices for managing and negotiating in cross-cultural conditions.

New joining SIEs need to be actively supported during their adjustment phases with options including partnering programs that link new joiners with both other new joiners and mentors who provide ongoing support. Many organisations provide new joiners with one or more commercially available books relating to living and working in Dubai - this should be continued plus supported by periodic coaching sessions. Extramural and social activities that are regularly arranged by an in-house team would enable SIEs to rapidly establish and grow a social support network. Corporate welfare, counselling and healthy living initiatives would provide additional support to avoid (or at least slow down) the gradual fatiguing of employees.

POS is clearly a significant component of SIE adjustment and commitment - organisations need to bring this into the open, acknowledge the importance of establishing positive POS and start considering how positive POS can be achieved. Line managers should be made aware of their role in supporting SIEs and the imperative of establishing positive POS with their performance being assessed as part of an annual 360° review. Organisations should take steps to make certain that procedural justice, as part their disciplinary procedure, is supported by robust processes that are implemented equitably, fairly and rigorously.

It is acknowledged that the UAE legislative framework is unlikely to materially change in the short term. Accordingly, organisations should be informing and educating SIEs during the recruitment and induction process about their legal rights and obligations under UAE law. A basic summary of the labour, residential and other key legislation and how they are implemented would go a long way to supporting SIE adjustment and avoiding culture shock and regret.

This description of organisational interventions, management processes and training programs does not cover all possibilities - it is provided as a simple illustration of how the model could be used as a tool to identify the issues and develop a program based on best practices. Furthermore, it is noted that most of the suggest good practices currently exist and are not new. However, comprehensive and integrated programs are either not being implemented or have, to this researcher's knowledge, not been deployed in a coordinated manner with the specific focus being on SIEs and their potential for self-interest bias.

The proposal for an overall suite of management processes and programs is a new actionable learning and knowledge creation element that has arisen from the study. By implementing some or all of these management and training interventions, a UAE-based organisation is more likely to support SIEs in positively adjusting to the multicultural environment and developing positive POS. This will engender a SIE's affective commitment and hence reduced propensity for insecurity, self-protection and self-interest biases.

8 Review and analysis of the research findings and model

This chapter presents the final cycle of the cooperative inquiry process during which the data analysis and model was presented to the participants, the research organisation and selection of professional peers for their review and comment.

8.1 Participant, Peer and Professional Reviews

Six meetings were arranged for sharing and critiquing the research findings and model. The review cycle started with the sixth, and final, learning set meeting that had been (as discussed in the research program chapter) reconfigured to be a feedback and review session with the participants. A workshop was held with the researcher's and participants' organisation's Human Resource team to present the research conclusions and model for their critical review and implementation of the recommendations.

Four peer reviews were arranged with professionals who had not been part of the study or CI process. These peer reviews addressed the concern that the participants' and the researcher may have developed unconscious positive confirmation biases towards the model due their involvement with the study. Two of the reviews were with local professional SIEs to gain their contextual reflections with the third being with an UK based management research thought leader for an international perspective. The fourth session was with a Dubai government employee and UAE local national to obtain a local but non-SIE perspective on the research and its implications.

This chapter firstly presents the outcome of the sixth LSM which is then followed by the reflections and observations that emerged from the peer reviews.

8.2 Participant's concluding Reflections and Critique of the SIESIM

The sixth LSM was convened with four objectives; the first being to capture the participants' thoughts on which were the main drives that led SIEs into self-interest biases. The second was to engage the participants' deep first-hand personal and profession understanding of the workplace problem to critically review and validate (or challenge and refute) the SIESIM and then reflect on the overall research problem and its context. The fourth goal was to use the final group meeting as an opportunity to collect the data on what had been learnt and implemented by the participants as a result of their involvement in CI based research study.

8.2.1 Ranking and assessment of Self-interest drivers

The LSM began with the participants being requested to capture their thoughts in response to the rhetorical prompt "how would you describe, to your family and peers, what you have learnt about the main influences affecting SIEs". The task was completed in silence before any data was presented or discussions held as the aim was to gather their residual impressions and unbiased or primed thoughts as participants who had been reflecting on the challenges of being a SIE throughout the CI process of many months.

The participant's untainted recall and reflections returned four main influences; namely Job insecurity, Organisational ethical climate and leadership; Cultural differences; and culture shock. Other factors noted included SIE motivations and insecurities, work and social pressures to perform, personal commitments and the UAE legal framework.

The participants were then given a full list of the themes underpinning the SIESIM. They were requested to use the list as an aide memoire and rank, in order of importance, the main influences they considered led and nudged SIEs towards self-interest. The outcome closely mirrored their first assessment with the following six factors, in order of importance, being considered most powerful:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Job insecurity | 4. Cross-cultural dynamics |
| 2. Ethics and Ethical leadership | 5. Adjustment and culture shock (sense of foreignness) |
| 3. Pressure to perform | 6. POS and Leader-follower relations |

The group considered the issues that had risen to the top and there was little ensuing discussion as it was unsurprising to the participants based on their experiences that these issues had come out as the most significant drivers.

The research inference that was drawn from these two exercises was that the participants considered the primary influences contributing to SIE self-interest to be Job Insecurity (including the UAE context) followed by workplace ethicality and leadership. Of secondary, but still significant influence, were cross cultural differences, adjustment and culture shock, POS including leader-follower relationships and pressure to perform.

During the mapping of these results onto the SIESIM, (as part of the post meeting data analysis), it was noted that they each had a significant role in establishing pathways toward moral disengagement. Cross cultural differences had been identified as a specific contextual issue that influenced a SIE's adjustment and culture shock, development of positive POS and leader-follower relationships and anxiety resulting from pressure to perform. The combination and interaction of these three consequences of being a SIE was recognised in the model as directly contributing to Job insecurity which, in turn, was viewed as an antecedent to moral disengagement. Workplace ethics and ethical leadership had been represented throughout the ethics set of themes as important drivers that engendered or inhibited a SIE's psychological movement towards moral disengagement. The conclusion that arose was that as the participants' top six influences on SIE self-interest appeared had been effectively represented within the SIESIM process, so the validity of the model was partially confirmed.

8.2.2 Review and Reflections on the SIESIM

In the second half of the LSM, the SIESIM was presented and explained to the participants for their critical review and challenge. An engaging and interactive discussion ensued that delved into the participants' reasoning and reflections on the model and how it captured the challenges and issues faced by SIEs. Appendix E, sections P and Q, contains the discussion transcripts.

The participants' initial responses to the SIESIM were strongly supportive of the framework and structure. They noted, as per the statements below, that the model had distilled and captured their perceptions of the SIE context and they identified with the processes and pathways shown in the SIESIM.

"You've pretty much mapped my first eight months"

"I think the consequences [of being a SIE] are spot-on"

"I identify with all of that - seeing it so clearly laid out makes it obvious"

"I was sceptical at the start, but the best part was how it all pieced together and gave me a model to understand my situation."

The SIESIM had provided the participants with a simple visual device which readily enabled them to map and understand their own individual experiences. The identification with the SIESIM allowed them to appreciate how they had been, to a greater or lesser extent, swept along the paths towards self-interest and biased decision-making. The participants reflected on the SIESIM's portrayal of the degeneration of ethics as a SIE's temporal, but seemingly inevitable, flow towards moral disengagement. Job insecurity was again recognised as a main node that both attracted self-interest and acted as a spur to further self-interest. These views were expressed as follows :

"it [the adjustment process] is a combination of the sum of perceived organisational support + differences in ethics + UAE context + cross-cultural dynamics which will lead generally to a sense of life insecurity which is wider and not just in the organisation."

"I don't think one can do anything about the ethical [flow process] - people always go to the bottom of ethics"

"Getting to/arriving at decision-making with selfish interest is very dependent on the individual's sense of vulnerability and self-perceptions with regard to ethics and culture"

An interesting view was noted by one of the lawyers, who shared their frustration at being viewed as uncooperative by their peers and leaders when they tried to act in accordance with their personal and professional ethical standards. The consequence for this participant was chronic stress related to job insecurity.

"As a lawyer, I can't let my ethics shift and end up in moral disengagement, so I end up in the bottom square in the antecedents for moral disengagement [containing low POS, job insecurity, etc.]. Because I don't drop my standards I'm perceived as being difficult and this leads me to every week being concerned that I'm going to be sacked and having job insecurity due to low POS. So, for me the model does explain some of my challenges."

One of the participants challenged the model's apparent prediction of the inevitability of moral disengagement. Their opinion was that in reality the drivers and counterbalances are more fluid and even more interactive than that portrayed by the seemingly static model.

"do we really believe that we can stop people ending up in the box on the right? The model explains how the process could flow. The elements will interact much more than shown in the static model."

The participant suggested that the dynamic nature of the reality needed in future to be more thoroughly included in the explanation. This view was acknowledged and has been integrated in the description of model presented in chapter 7.

The conversation moved on to the representation of SIE progressive adjustment and how it affected and changed SIE decision-making processes. The consensus that emerged was that they had all experienced and had seen other SIEs' decision-making and ethicality change and adjust to local conditions. These views corroborated the literature plus supported the inclusion of those themes as factors and pathways in the SIESIM. The reasons for adjustment included, inter alia, peer and leadership pressures, chronic fatigue and perceptions of differences due to cross cultural contexts. The participants' reflections on SIE adaptation were captured in the following statements.

"I want to put a different spin on the question, as we assume we've all come from a place of high standards and ethics. So, what if a person in the organisation has very high ethics? How will the model play out? Say yes, the decision-making process does evolve because one gets fatigued. Watching my colleagues, and also getting tired of arguments, so I will need to expend extra efforts to maintain my ethics. Therefore I conclude that decision-making does evolve over time."

"I know someone who went through the adjustment process and now do what management says. They lost their will to live, they went from happy to miserable. They said to me 'it makes my life easier. I don't care anymore'"

"the adaption is related to individual's national culture with some being more flexible and others not."

It was noted that if there was no adjustment or change then SIEs would potentially not become any more prone to self-interest than their original pre-expatriation behaviours. However, this view was considered too idealistic by the rest of the group as the pressures on SIEs to adjust were seen as overwhelming.

A HR professional shared an anecdote that illustrated the challenges faced by SIEs:

"As part of HR, we've seen it. On the first day, a person arrives, and they are happy and excited. But after six months they come back and say 'what am I into? This is the biggest mistake I've made!' If they can afford to leave the job and repatriate, then they will not stay in the shit. If they can't afford to leave due to economic and employment constraints, then they adapt and change their standards and stay."

The conclusion, the SIESIM had provided the participants with a simple visual device which readily enabled them to map and understand their own individual experiences. The identification with the SIESIM allowed

them to come to appreciate how they had been, to a greater or lesser extent, swept along the paths towards self-interest and biased decision-making. With the SIESIM as a visual aid, they recognised the symptoms of self-interest and moral disengagement in themselves, their colleagues and their teams. This moral maturation would in the future support them to proactively implement actions to avoid unethical behaviour – i.e. becoming ethical leaders

8.2.3 Revisiting the problem statement

To close the research loop, the participants were asked to reconsider, if the self-interest biased of SIEs in Dubai was a real and significant organisational problem - i.e. the original research question. Their responses were insightful as they were based on their own SIE experiences married with a deeper understanding following their participation in CI process and having seen the SIESIM. The responses ranged from simple affirmations to observations with deeper implications. Confirmation of the problem being real and significant was provided in the following responses:

“I absolutely, yes, agree with the problem statement and see it as a problem.”

“It’s a problem because most organisations don’t know it’s a problem which is weird because most leaders were once SIEs and young themselves.”

“It’s very concerning that no one has done anything about this issue before and to rectify it at a corporate level.”

The self-interest of SIEs was recognised to be magnified, as compared to other employees, due to the specific context, confluence of issues and material consequences of job loss. Self-interest was seen to dominate behaviour as a result of chronic fatigue, weak manager-follower relationships, poor ethical leadership and low POS. As depicted in the model, and noted in the statement below, the problem arose out of a combination of factors from within the individual, the organisation with its cross-cultural context and the larger external environment of Dubai.

“I think a key point has been overlooked. One has the same issue back home but as a SIE the [UAE] labour/legal residential laws, cross and multicultural barriers all lead to fatigue and it’s exhausting trying to deal with all that shit and then trying to still come to an ethical decision. The organisation is supportive, but we need our managers to support us, it becomes too much and so we give up.”

It was noted, as below, that many of the factors affecting SIEs appeared to originate from within the organization. However due to a lack of corporate awareness and training, most organisations were failing to inhibit SIE tendencies.

“Looking at the model I see that most of the boxes are organisational to SIE interactions and so, reflecting on this, this is an organisational problem, and is started by the organisation maintained and sustained by the organisation but they are unaware of it.”

Several participants noted that part of the issue was that the research problem was an uncomfortable and potentially embarrassing topic for local management to address as it would necessitate acknowledging failure and the breakdown in ethical standards and management control. Furthermore, the lack of appetite

to address the issue could perversely be due to the self-interest of the expatriate community that provides the majority of local management professionals. So, for various reasons it has apparently remained stuck in an organisational blind spot and will not be addressed until it is brought into the light. These views were expressed as follows:

It's a very big issue. Of course, it is unspoken, unthought of, it is all kept very discreet. It's embedded - It's so common from people in a similar culture that decision-making is definitely influenced. It's a challenge that first you need to be aware of it and then we have to overcome it."

"This is a behavioural trait that we should be aware of, it's inevitable. If it's left unchecked and unnoticed and it is a problem. If we recognise it as a problem, then it can be managed and turned into a positive."

An insight that emerged was that organisations, and by extension Dubai, were not getting the full support or value from their SIEs as their energy and efforts were being misdirected and defocused from organisational goals. In addition, in response to the pressures for self-preservation, SIE performance was not just misaligned but may actually be contrary and a hinderance to the company's interests.

"I agree with you and agree with the problem statement - the final element being a loss for the employer - even though the employer is also a contributing factor. So, there is a vicious cycle that is interacting between employer and employee."

"It is a problem for organisations' decisions, as if they [the decisions] are not influenced then decisions would/could be much better for the organisations."

"It doesn't serve the organisation or the country you're in. You're selling it short, it's mercenary. It's just not enabling long term sustainability."

"This is the problem for the organisation because decisions are not best for the organisation. Implicitly the decisions by SIEs only take into account their expected tenure and any long-term consequences beyond their stay are not their problem. They externalise the problems for the organisation to encounter."

It was agreed that if the status quo persisted, then organisations would continue to fail to achieve their full potential plus long-term issues, such as sustainability, would be unlikely to ever be effectively addressed.

Overall, the participants came to a consensus that the self-interest biases of self-initiated expatriates in Dubai was a valid and real organisational problem. The problem was seen to have persisted and grown, in part due to SIE self-interest not being previously researched, but more likely due to the local leadership and management community not having recognised or raised it as an issue of concern. Based on the participants responses to the model, it appeared that if management professionals acknowledged and engaged with the overall problem, then the underlying issues may well be readily resolvable.

8.2.4 Participants' professional and personal development

Cooperative inquiry is built on and around people learning, reflecting, developing and implementing their new-found insights. The full set of the participants' actionable learning and self-reflective observations have been included in Appendix E. This section presents a summary of their reported professional development, realisations and how these had been actioned in their personal and work contexts.

The personal reflections have been consolidated into two broad topics. The first related to their collective insights that all SIEs appeared to have a similar sense of isolation as illustrated in the following statements:

"From the learning sets I now realise that I am not the only one who has these worries and concerns- of paying all the rent up front, maybe losing your job and concern that your salary will be paid. I took home the picture that you showed in the last meeting [SIEs adjustment cycle] and shared it with my husband to show him that we are all feeling the same - white skin or brown skin. The picture made it much easier for us as we now understand that being an expat feels the same for everybody and we are not in it alone. The learning set discussions have really changed my views as I did not know that other people had the same feelings and thoughts - I thought I was alone."

"Now I know that it's not just your culture that goes through this [expatriate adjustment cycles], but as a SIE, we would all go through the same cycle."

"Though the other participants were from different cultures and nations it was amazing to hear them saying exactly what I was about to say and on my mind. At least by knowing that the other people have the same thought and issues, this gave me support in my own situation."

These observations pointed to the finding that most SIEs probably tend to think that they are the only one facing SIE challenges. Their misinformed views and perceptions were being sustained by a lack of effective and supportive social networks which exacerbated their sense of isolation and increased anxiety. By coming to accept their context as "normal under the circumstances", the participants experienced a reduction in stress coupled with improved adjustment and sense of belonging. These observations pointed to the importance and value to be gained by organisations actively supporting SIEs, especially through their early adjustment phases. The establishment of SIE groups and a buddy system would materially increase network support and dispel myths.

The second set of personal reflections related to their greater understanding of how cross-cultural issues and ethics effected their work context and moral disengagement. Several participants noted, as below, their improved understanding of cross-cultural dynamics which had enabled them to implement new skills to that accounted for the multicultural environment.

"I Increasingly noticed and became aware of cultural differences in work contexts. For example, some cultures can't say no so instead they say yes but then don't deliver. The question is, are they lying always or is it just culturally unacceptable to say no?"

"I now realise that cross-cultural does affect behaviours."

"The cross-cultural aspects have sensitised me that memos & messages need to be read in context."

“During the sessions I was able to be aware of different cultures in the learning set and get to see them in action.”

“During the cross-cultural discussion, the penny dropped, and I realised if only I’d been told that within my first few weeks of arriving then it would have been so much easier. It was quite reassuring that I was not alone. “

Cross-cultural issues have been interwoven throughout the SIESIM. The negative effects of being ignorant of cross-cultural dimensions can be easily addressed by providing employees with cross cultural training and skills. Organisations employing multi-cultural teams and or working across cultures should routinely be providing cross cultural training and awareness.

Though not explicitly stated during the group session, the participants also took away a better understanding of moral disengagement and its manifestations. In various ways, they had each started to recognise how they and their colleagues employed the mechanisms to rationalise their cognitive dissonance. Several confidential conversations were had in corridors and tea rooms regarding their insights and experiences on the sensitive topic of the challenge of retaining an ethical compass in an ethically uncertain context. They all commented, in one way or another, on how with just a basic introduction to cross-cultural dimensions, they had learnt how to be more effective at their jobs and in their personal lives.

On a personal note, as the original intention was narrowly focused on engaging with the participants to explore the workplace problem, so the researcher inadvertently overlooked that they may gain and grow personally and professionally from their involvement in the project. CI’s strong constructionist and social roots prevailed, and it soon became apparent that the participants were finding the LSMs of value in and of themselves. Once this positive unintended consequence was recognised, so a greater focus and support was given to their personal and professional growth by providing more awareness generating materials plus adding extra time and space for personal and group reflection in each LSM. This enabled the research process to deliver several positive unintended consequences of creating a sense of belonging and kinship as noted below.

“I’ve unconsciously previously felt and thought about these issues. It was delightful to get together and talking in a group is very useful for me to get to see and understand first-hand other people’s views.”

“Having a forum was cathartic and helped intellectualise and analyse what we’ve been through. Plus, it gave space for reflection”

A participant used “cathartic” which encapsulated how several of the participants felt after completing the study. The CI process had afforded the participants an opportunity to feel supported as the group sessions providing a platform for deep dialogue in a psychological safe space. The meetings and mutual trust had empowered the participants to come to recognise and accept that they were not unique and that the SIE context was a much larger and more pervasive challenge than they had appreciated. The benefits of being

part of a group discussing a common problem, as per the CI textbook, had enabled the old saying “a problem shared, is a problem solved” to be realised.

Finally, the participants unanimously expressed their thanks and that they had enjoyed the experience plus strongly suggested that the programme was rerun for their colleagues. The participants noted that a course/program of this nature would be very useful for SIEs as part of an induction process.

8.3 Organisational Review and Application

The study findings and SIESIM were shared in a workshop with the researcher’s and participants’ organisations’ HR Director and members of the HR team. The session consisted of a presentation of the main issues encountered by SIEs and a detailed explanation of the SIESIM. The SIESIM was positioned as a management tool for organisations to identify the key drivers affecting self-interest biases in their workplace. Once identified, the organisations would be able to proactively develop and implement training, awareness and professional development programs that would ameliorate and disempower the issues disengage the issues. During the reflection and Q&A session that followed the presentation, the attendees affirmed, as shown below, that the SIESIM and research problem were both valid and real.

“It is a problem for organisations because you don’t get ethical behaviour as you want and expected.

“This was very beneficial to us from HR as it made explicit what we knew and thought privately.”

Members of the HR team identified with the model and research and made the following observations:

“Because you support two or three families back home, so you have to have some self-interest.

“SIE’s ethics changes over time due to cognitive dissonance, as a coping mechanism. Mentality changes - so that I’m not even aware I’ve done it [something unethical]. The changes are insidious and gradual. So, one only notes them when you return back home and you realise, you’re doing things differently to the way you used to. At the time, it’s invisible to you.”

As Cooperative inquiry research has a core aim of enabling workplace changes and actions, so the discussion turned to how the organisation would take forward the conclusions and recommendations arising from the study. The HR team considered their options and proposed the range of actions, as expressed below, relating to the improvement and development of induction programme, performance evaluations, the recruitment process, cross-cultural training and the organisation’s ethical policies and standards.

“We will revise our induction to reduce the focus on providing information on the organisation structure and operation of the business and increase the content and focus on ethics, behaviour, leadership and our company values.”

“We need to blunt the arrows - look at performance evaluation (360°) and moral behaviour rather than just business performance.”

“We need to relook at recruiting and what the organisation wants to be with respect to cultural mix. I moot using pre-recruitment screening of candidates to avoid those with weak ethical standards.”

“A cross-cultural training programme needs to be considered and implemented in some form.”

“Organisational culture - we need to understand our real/actual organisational culture and to be honest with people at recruitment. We are a tough business, and unforgiving. We need to be open to ensure we get the right fit.”

“An ethics program needs to be rolled out to actualise and operationalise our current code of ethics that is lying dormant.”

In conclusion, the HR Director complemented and thanked the researcher for his work and noted that the participants and organisation had greatly benefited from the project. In return, this author acknowledged and thanked the participants and the organisation for their sustained support.

8.4 Peer Reviews

8.4.1 SIE Professional - Executive

The first of two Peer reviews was undertaken with an expatriate who had been living in Dubai for nine years. He was married with four dependents and worked as a Senior Executive with commercial responsibilities for a Dubai-based company with international operations. He was shown the same presentation as used during the participant organisation’s workshop session.

His first observation was that some of the ethics and cross-cultural information was new to him even though he had worked across cultures and in senior corporate roles for more than 15 years. This finding was a surprise as ignorance of the theory of cross-cultural dimensions was not expected from someone with his tenure and international experience. This again pointed to the need for a review of the regional approach to ethical and cross-cultural training and awareness.

While discussing POS and the importance of organisational justice he stated;

“organisational justice is not universal in the UAE-it’s not the same rules for everyone.”

This observation alludes to his perception of the status quo that local nationals are treated differently to expatriates in the UAE (Forstenlechner, 2010b). From a SIE’s perspective these differences would undermine the establishment and maintenance of POS with the previously discussed negative consequences.

The interviewee considered that in his opinion and experience the main contributing factors to SIE self-interest biases was the (de)activation of one’s moral compass and fatigue as illustrated in the following quotes.

“SIEs arrive with their own cultural and moral compasses, a lot of which are universal. How do you appeal to that and keep it, in a corporate reality that is clashing [with their own ethics]. It’s not as simple as saying ‘you know what is wrong’, because it is so easy to say in a corporate ‘what’s in this for me’ and act accordingly. I see that people’s behaviour is adjusted in fundamental ways due to self-preservation based on fear of loss.”

“this [model] resonates with me as numbness and becoming punch drunk.”

These observations were similar to those of the CI participants and reflected the view that long-term SIEs are more inclined to fatigue which in turn reduced their resistance to unethical behaviour. The progressive

effects of ethical fatigue had not previously been explicitly emphasized in literature. Following on, he noted and suggest the following

“The model provides a clarity to the pathways to moral disengagement and should be presented to human resource teams so that they can implement corporate measures to reduce SIEs propensity for self-interest biases.”

In response to the discussion of the problem statement’s validity and currency he observed:

“I absolutely think it’s a problem and will be a problem of varying scales proportional to the international scale and size of the organisation. Why is this so, because in the digital age of immediacy, now, now, now - things need to be done quickly and with local power dynamics and aversion to risk and uncertainty, it is a fertile breeding ground for unethical behaviour to emerge. So, in addition/because of this, people are also taking decisions in their self-interest, rather than in the organisation’s long-term interests and needs. This is a problem for organisations because part of being a sustainable organisation for me, is creating the space for people to be creative in the long-term interest of the organisation. So, by implication SIEs short termism is not aligned with the organisation’s sustainability.”

This statement echoed the participants’ conclusion that SIE self-interest is a material issue that, as it currently stands, is affecting local business’ performance and sustainability. While concluding the discussion, the interviewee noted that there appear to be similarities between SIEs and millennials:

“Can I substitute millennials for SIE? As they come into an organisation with a degree and see a job with us as a step on the career ladder-rather than the start of a long-term career with a particular entity. Millennials are disloyal, all they want is the salary.”

This observation was a new avenue of thought and opened up the opportunity for a broader generalisation. The underlying theory could possibly be extended to cover other professional employees who had short-term personal career goals rather than expectations of a long-term career.

A BBC article (2017) noted that the rise of freelancing and the gig economy has led to a career landscape that was “No more career ladder” but rather a “career lattice or web.” The current trend was for employment to be made up of multiple short-term contracts. This was predicted to result in millennials having seven times more employment roles than their parents who had an average of three full times roles. The multi-job approach of millennials, when viewed through the model’s perspective on self-interest and SIE tendencies, led to concerns for the ability of organisations to tackle long-term challenges (more than 5 to 10 years) and implement sustainable solutions for their long-term success.

8.4.2 SIE Professionals – Executive and Consultant

The second peer review included two interviewees who have both lived in Dubai for 10 years, were married and had senior executive and management consulting careers and backgrounds. The meeting was an interactive discussion around a presentation covering the research question, the main themes and then leading up to the explanation of the SIESIM and research conclusions.

As with the first peer review, the first material observation related to their lack of familiarity with the existing cross-cultural models. This led to the recognition that even though an expatriate may have been working in a cross-cultural context for many years, they may still not have had contact with any formal training on cross-cultural dimensions.

The interviewees agreed and acknowledged that changes and adjustments do occur in a SIE's ethicality and behaviour due to the influences of living and working in Dubai and noted:

"how many people land in Dubai and only last 6 to 12 months in their first job due to adjustment and cross-cultural challenges. That was me. I now only recruit people with more experience of being an expatriate."

"Some people do adjust -assimilate, adjust and change their morals and ethicality."

"I had the UAE bubble and was trying to reconcile my circle of concern with the circle of influence. I now behave and align to the ecosystem in order to stay - do a deal with the devil."

This discussion illustrates how SIEs are aware of the challenges of living and working in Dubai and find ways to adjust and live with their cognitive dissonance. The model provided the interviewees with a frame of reference to understand their and other SIE's behaviour. When considering if the research problem had validity, the interviewees stated:

"I'm not completely sold with the self-interest factors leading to biased decision-making. Yes, they are present, but that's not the total picture. But yes, the pattern is valid in the Middle East. [However] when you add the restrictions of labour law, you see these things happen here . . . "

"Yes, and I think that it's valid - a key factor is around the Labour law and getting over culture shock so as to create a great life for you and your family. But when this [great life] is threatened by things at work then I want to protect it. Plus thinking that I may be able to get away with it and I see other people behaving like that in the organisation. So, I think it [the model] is valid."

The session concluded with a discussion on how the SIE self-interests manifested as organisational problems.

"It leads to increased turnover of personnel and the spending of money on the wrong things."

"An unfortunate outcome is that there is no progression from an organisational perspective - a lack of maturing and growth. Nothing changes because of a lack of ownership of the problem."

"Looking at the model, you can go as far as fraud being a problem."

"I don't know why we care less here. I suggest to colleagues that they care less in order to help adjust and survive and make it work. Is this correct? I think with respect to Maslow [hierarchy of

needs] we stay on the bottom two rungs. The third rung, a sense of belonging is not present here [in the UAE], so how do we progress to the peak of self-actualisation.”

The second peer review reaffirmed the validity of the SIESIM as both participants related to and engaged with model's issues and their interactions. They agreed that the model portrayed, in a simplified sense, the scenario faced by SIEs in Dubai. They noted that the SIESIM illustrated how SIEs adapted and changed over time which included moral disengagement and increased self-interest-and-self-protection.

The three peer reviews with local professionals aligned with the study participants' views and so reinforced the conclusions from the LSMs and the thematic analysis. The reviewers identified, as SIEs, with the overall scenario and emphasised how they had all seen SIE's ethicality and morality adjust and change over their expatriate careers. The peer reviewers concluded that the study problem had validity and that the model was sufficiently robust to provide a useful platform for discussing, understanding and implementing measures to reduce SIE self-interest biases and their consequences.

8.4.3 International Management Consultant and Researcher

The interviewee was a world recognised developer of organisational models and change management. He and his research centre had developed a methodology and tool that assessed the corporate culture and values of an organisation. The diagnostic tool, which will be kept anonymous to respect the integrity of the interviewee, had been used to map the values of over 6,000 organisations and 3,000 leaders in more than ninety countries.

The intent of the meeting was to share the draft SIESIM to gauge, from an international independent third-party management researcher, if it had validity and applicability. The interviewee's response was positive as he reflected that the patterns presented by the model converged with his own experience and thinking.

In his opinion, the SIESIM provided a novel perspective on his use of the concept of cultural entropy and how it manifested and spread. Cultural entropy was explained as an organisational measure of dysfunction that emerged due to negative and fear-based concerns and the inefficient deployment of energy. The SIESIM appeared to be mirroring cultural entropy from the perspective of the emergence of self-interest biases and moral disengagement. He noted that the SISEM had linked an individual's personal entropy and the organisation's cultural entropy. He suggested that his assessment tool could be used in conjunction with the SIESIM. His tool would enable an organisation to understand its cultural entropy and its key contributing factors at a high level that could then be fed in the SIESIM to identify actions to ameliorate individual entropy and self-interest biases.

The outcome of the discussion was that an opportunity existed to customise his existing diagnostic tool so that it would be possible to potentially quantify which aspects of an organisation's culture and values were contributing to or impeding an employee's self-interest. This potential avenue has been identified by the researcher as one of the starting points for further research into quantifying the self-interest model's dynamics.

8.4.4 Dubai Government Employee

The interviewee was a local national and a strategic and executive adviser in the Ruler of Dubai's office. The meeting's agenda was to present and explore the potential relevance of the thesis and its findings to his work and goals. He started by explaining that he had been tasked with finding ways to increase expatriate commitment to Dubai in order to improve their contribution, levels of satisfaction, sense of belonging and longevity of stay. He captured this strategic objective as:

"I want people to feel homely and contribute to the success of the UAE. They should feel as comfortable as locals. If they come for economic reasons [alone] then they will not give us their best."

The presentation of the self-interest model generated an interactive discussion and several trains of thought emerged. The first was regarding the effects of job insecurity and how it affected all expatriates. He noted that what happens or will happen to people when they leave or are forced out of an organisation was a key contributing factor to their overall behaviour. He compared the effects of having to leave the country or find a new job within 30 days of losing employment as follows:

"if I'm sacked, then there is a ticking bomb. "

In response, he noted that the government could possibly reduce the pressure on the unemployed by investigating alternatives to the current situation. He suggested that he would like to take forward and explore the options of partnering with the Reglabs initiative (UAE government funded incubator and think tank tasked with testing and piloting the effects of new regulations) to test the effects of policy and regulation changes which could ameliorate the pressure experienced by expatriates who lose their jobs. The initial idea was to consider if the provision of more time for different categories of expatriates to find new jobs rather than having to comply with the standard 30 days would be effective in reducing anxiety and improving commitment.

Reflecting on how ethics fitted into the model and was portrayed as driver, he noted

"this is something huge in the model."

This perspective was new to him and engendered a fresh perceive on the differences and impacts of situational, absolute and relative ethics.

Considering the model as a management tool, he observed:

"the model has given me new insights and perspectives on the situation. It is very useful. Looking at the model it does give reasons and insights for some of the problems and challenges seen and faced by expats in the economy and the employers and hence how to discuss and take forward ideas and actions."

His concluding remark was:

"there is value in this.... This was an amazing discussion. "

The outcome that can be drawn from the meeting was a tacit validation of the usefulness and value of the research by a representative of the Dubai government. It was acknowledged that the work, in the interviewee's opinion, was novel and that the SIESIM could be used to understand the perceptions and experience of expatriates and how their stay could be improved for the benefit of Dubai as a whole.

8.5 Summary

The final cycle of the CI process provided important information and data to complete the research study. The model's utility as a tool to enable an organisation to visualise the pathways through which SIEs tend towards moral disengagement was tested and shown to be valuable. The participant organisation's workshop and the peer reviews were an opportunity for management professionals with fresh eyes and perspectives to review the study and findings. Their insights, recommendations and actions supported the subsequent improvement of the SIESIM and its internal functionality is explained (as contained Chapter 6.3). The responses provided by the participants linking their experiences with the SIESIM consolidates this study's contribution to existing academic knowledge.

9 Research Conclusions

The study aimed to investigate the workplace problem of how Self-Initiated Expatriates' (SIEs) insecurities arise and the affects these have on self-interest, ethical standards and organisational performance. The research need stemmed from a perceived pervading ignorance and silence on the full extent of the problem and its unintended material consequences for business effectiveness. The study set out to explore two key questions:

1. What aspects of SIEs' work and social contexts in Dubai created significant stressors that precipitated insecurity, self-interest biases and unethical behaviour that then manifested during organisational decision making? and,
2. Can those aspects be identified and developed into lessons so that SIEs and organisations can come to appreciate, understand and address this complex problem?

The problem statement and literature review provided a foundation for the establishment and implementation of a Cooperative Inquiry (CI) programme. The CI process led to the development of a Self-Initiated Expatriate Self-Interest Model (SIESIM) that was a first of its kind depiction of the research problem in context. The SIESIM provided a framework for understanding how Dubai-based SIEs experienced and responded to their multiple and mutually reinforcing workplace and social stresses. A SIE's specific Dubai context increased their propensity for moral disengagement and self-interest biases that manifested during decision making. The model's accuracy and usefulness as a practical management tool was preliminarily validated by the research participants and five independent peer reviews. This outcome responded to the first part of the research question.

The second part of the research question was addressed by using the SIESIM to identify a range of organisational interventions that could reduce the propensities and cut the pathways that led toward moral disengagement. The utility of the model to provide a framework for identifying organisational interventions was tested by the participating organisation's Human Resource team who readily identified practical interventions to meet their specific needs. This outcome satisfied the second research objective.

The main conclusions that arose from the study have variously been corroborated and supported by existing research and/or the data produced from the learning set discussions and peer reviews. The first conclusion was that the self-interest biases of SIEs in Dubai was a real and valid organisational problem. The combination of individual, organisational, cross-cultural and external environmental factor created a complex multidimensional challenge that appeared to amalgamate into a self-sustaining vicious cycle.

It was recognised that part of the problem was that self-interest biases of SIES had not previously been openly discussed nor explained and so had survived in a virtual organisational blind spot. In response to this gap, the SIESIM provided a simple visual representation of how SIEs adjusted over time and moved through interlinked pathways towards moral disengagement and self-interest bias. The research data suggested that

once the problem had been described and contextualised by the SIESEM then it appeared to be relatively simple to open up the discussion and identify a range of organisational interventions. The conclusion that emerged was that the SIESIM was a useful visual device that provided a practical tool to support objective and unemotional dialogue on SIE self-interest biases. This led to the recognition that the model could become a catalyst for dissolving the overall problem into manageable pieces.

A previously unforeseen consequence of not addressing the problem was that organisations, and by extension Dubai, were not getting the full support or value from SIEs. If the problem of SIE self-interest biases was permitted to remain unchallenged, then organisations would continue to fail to achieve their full potential plus long-term and sustainability issues would not be affectively considered or addressed.

In addition, it appeared that the model's general underlying structure and concept may be applicable and generalisable to other regions (where residence is linked to employment status) and employment categories that have similar tendencies and intentions to those of SIEs – this would include term contractors and millennials.

Using the data and the SIESIM as a framework for understanding what contributed to a SIE's self-interest propensity led to the following conclusions:

- The primary influences contributing to SIE self-interest appeared to be due to a) Job Insecurity (which included pressure to perform and the UAE legal context) and b) workplace ethics and ethical leadership. Secondary, but still significant influences arose from c) cross cultural dynamics and communications, d) SIE's ongoing adaptation and culture shock, and e) lack of perceived organisational support (including leader-follower relationships).
- SIEs are commonly ill-prepared and unaware of how to be effective when living and working in cross and multicultural contexts. The study concluded that employees should receive cross-cultural awareness and sensitisation training to reduce the stresses of working across cultures and improve organisational effectiveness.
- Physical and emotional fatigue endured by SIEs gradually and progressively led to ethical fatigue and degradation such that SIEs eventually succumb to situational ethics, drop in ethical standards and moral disengagement.
- A SIE's decision-making and ethicality continually changes and adjusts over their time as an expatriate. SIE's changed their perceptions of risk, due to normalisation, which induced ethical fading and so impacted their moral assessments and leading to moral disengagement.
- A manifestation of the influence of SIE's short termism was noted in their rationalisation and minimisation of the consequences of unethical behaviour by assuming that they would simply leave the country and flee the problems with limited, if any, long term repercussions. Furthermore, the perceptions of the low likelihood and consequence of being apprehended in a Dubai-based organisation for an unethical act emerged as a significant antecedent to immoral behaviour and

moral disengagement. The establishment of distributive, collective and effective procedural justice processes by organisations would reduce this influence.

- The ethicality and ethical behaviour of SIEs working in multicultural environments, without effective and implemented ethical codes of practice, appeared to drop to the lowest common denominator. As the international workplace becomes increasingly multicultural, then there is a strong indication that unethical group norms and moral disengagement by displaced and diffused responsibility will emerge in multicultural teams made up of SIEs.
- Perceived organisational support, as a management concept, was not widely understood nor were the magnitude of its influences, positive or negative, appreciated. Due to this ignorance, organisations and their management teams were seen to be failing to support and motivate SIEs and thus were missing out on achieving their teams' full potential.
- Professionals, including lawyers and accountants, that were governed by international professional codes of practice that were enforced, were noted to be less vulnerable to personal biases and moral disengagement.

10 Future Research and Development

The proposed first step was to road test and refine the SIESIM into a simple and used management tool. A plan has been developed to engage with local organisations and opinion leaders to share the research's findings and conclusions and in return obtain their opinions for improvements and extensions.

The study objectives focused on understanding and qualifying SIE's self-interest biases. It was beyond the scope to quantify the contributing factors or nature of consequences. Accordingly, the quantification of the problem's variables, and the testing of their interactions are all aspects suggested for future research. Examples include the quantification of the nature and extent of the impact of cross-cultural dimensions on a SIE's conscious and unconscious behaviour; exploration of the effects of gender, age, career stage, tenure, number of dependents & commitments and/or professional background on self-interest tendencies.

On the back of the extra data, it has been planned to use the SIESIM as the basis for the development of an assessment tool that measures an organisation's propensity to foster SIE self-interest and moral disengagement. The tool will focus on identifying which self-interest pathways have been activated in a specific organisational culture and workplace context. The results will be used to develop bespoke development plans to support SIEs and their teams. The plans will integrate policy and procedure upgrades with training and awareness underpinned by ongoing feedback and measurement. The ultimate vision is to commercialise the SIESIM for use by for local organisations for their SIEs.

The research data indicated that SIEs' decision-making and ethicality changes and adjusts over the time they are expatriates. It would be of interest to understand and quantify the nature, extent and consequences of these adjustments and how they affect self-interest tendencies.

The research scope was limited to SIEs in Dubai. A key conclusion, arising from the peer reviews, related to the potential generalisability and applicability of the model to other contexts. It would be of interest and perhaps beneficial to explore the model's validity in other countries and different organisational contexts that create similar self-interest pathways that lead to biased decision-making. The model may also be applicable to alternate employee categories with similar SIE predispositions and tendencies including millennials, temporary and contract workers.

Moral disengagement of SIEs and contract workers has not, to the researcher's knowledge, been extensively studied. Understanding why and under what circumstances these groups acquiesce to moral disengagement is unknown. Superficially, it seems that SIEs have three choices; 1. Accepting moral disengagement and keeping their head down to remain employed while weathering cognitive dissonance, 2. speaking their truth to power by taking an ethical position and accepting the potential negative consequences, and/or 3. choosing to leave the organisation and finding alternative employment. The underlying factors in each of these choices would provide insight into the way the model plays out in different contexts.

11 Personal and Professional Reflections

Throughout the research period, I progressively captured both my insights on the research programme's findings and reflections on my development as a scholar-practitioner. The former has been integrated into the body of the thesis. This section presents a review and reflection on the research challenges and my professional and personal development.

One of the first challenges, as is typical for all cooperative inquiry projects, was gaining organisational support. At the very start of my DBA thesis I discussed the idea with the CEO who was broadly supportive. Several months later, just after obtaining ethical approval, a new head of HR and Chief of Staff joined the organisation. As I presented the research and its requirements in detail they became (understandably) cautious and started to reflect on any unintended consequences that could arise. I explained that I had already addressed the foreseeable unintended consequences as part of the ethical approval process, and these were explained in the PIS and discussion topic list. In order to manage their concerns, it was agreed that I would start by engaging with just one of the participants, an HR team member, to pilot test my approach and to explain the study's aims. I supported this approach as it would give me a safety net and sense of security that the participants would be agreeing to participate with full knowledge and in a noncoercive context.

I duly met with the HR participant and ran through the study plan in some detail. After a day or two, as a cooling off period, she told me that in her personal and professional opinion the process had been clear and informed and there were no ethical or other issues with respect to the participant's recruitment process. This was fed back to the head of HR who gave a formal go-ahead to approach other potential participants and to start the in-house research. The insight that arose from this episode was that I had a choice of either debating the issues with the Chief of Staff/HR manager or acknowledging their point of view and working with them to arrive at a consensus. By taking the second route, I was able to obtain formal support from the highest levels which then continued throughout the research project.

A second insight was the consequences of deliberately taking the more challenging route of transcribing the learning set discussions by hand rather than electronic recording (either audio or video). Towards the end of the fifth meeting, as part of a parallel discussion, the participants noted that they would have been less comfortable, free, open and trusting if the sessions had been recorded. They noted that they would have been concerned that the recordings could have been demanded and viewed by the organisation's leadership which could lead to career repercussions. This concern and perception persisted even though the participants knew that the organisation had formally approved the research and agreed that all information was confidential. Hence my decision not to record the Participants was correct and yielded more honest and frank discussions. This insight will influence my approach when undertaking future managerial research and interview as I'll be aware of potential similar vulnerabilities.

The introduction (section 1) presented how I initially came to perceive the situation as being a potential workplace problem suitable for a doctoral thesis. Over the coming months, I continued to probe the problem and reflect on it to get a feel for its structure and nature - I believe that it is simple to complicate a problem, but incredibly complicated to simplify a problem. I have several diary entries relating to my grappling with the problem of self-interested expatriates working in Dubai and trying to unravel the tangled web of issues and consequences. Looking back, I now see that the majority of these early thoughts have been, in some form or other, addressed by the research and integrated into the SIE self-interest model that provides a simple visual representation of a complex puzzle.

As noted, the research program continually evolved and changed over 17 months. As an example, I read Cuyper, Notelaters and Witte's (2009) paper in mid-June 2016 which focused on job insecurity and employability among permanent workers, fixed term contractors and agency workers. This led to my insight that an important ingredient for my study was their explanation of how job insecurity might affect expatriates' behaviour. I followed up with an internet search of job insecurity and expatriates and it appeared that there were no academic papers or publications that cover both job insecurity and expatriates. A few papers were subsequently found about the psychological effects of being an expatriate and have been integrated into the literary review. The realisation that arose at the time was that a research process was not static nor cast in stone, but rather continually evolved as it dynamically responded to emerging data and understanding. My future research will therefore always embrace and honour an element of flexibility and curiosity.

In parallel with the job security insight, I came to the realisation that the fifth LSM that originally aimed to tie together the insights from the previous four meetings (namely decision-making, ethics, cross-cultural dimensions and perceived organisational support) was instead implicitly examining the effects of these four aspects on the employee's/expatriates' perceptions and behaviours. It became apparent that the centre of the problem maybe how the contextual circumstances and issues contributed to a sense of job insecurity with its loss aversion and fear of being fired. From this perspective, it became possible for moral disengagement and self-interest to emerge and influence decision-making. I decided to redirect the fifth LSM to focus on how a sense of insecurity, in particular job insecurity, would either exacerbate or reduce a SIE's overall sense of vulnerability and how that would then lead to self-preservation becoming entrained into decision-making. This change in the research plan provided the space for the inspiration to blossom that ultimately led to insight of using a cognitive map as part of the thematic analysis.

An issue that has great personal significance to me and was not explicitly addressed in the thesis is captured in my reflection diary note that observed "*professional expatriates in the GCC are seen as commodities with a shelf life.*" SIEs do not typically receive professional developmental training nor are expected by local organisations to have long-term corporate careers. This was alluded to in the plug and play discussion which noted that local corporates assume SIEs will arrive fully ready and able to start their jobs and be effective

from their first day. In my opinion this naïve assumption sits at the very core of the vicious cycle that exists between GCC corporations and their relationship to SIEs.

The consequences of this perspective and approach are that SIE's full potential and value are not holistically understood by local corporations. I understand and appreciate that these corporations have been burnt by investing in SIEs who then leave. However, by not investing in SIEs, they are inadvertently undermining the establishment of perceived organisational support and unconsciously contributing to a SIE's self-interest and short termism. Even after 12 years in the region, I still have no simple insights on how to unravel this Gordian knot but I'm hopeful that this thesis will provide a pathway towards the centre.

I was unconvinced during the DBA module phase, and at the start of the thesis still dubious, that cooperative inquiry was a valid and rigorous research methodology. My scepticism arose from my engineering and scientific background. I consciously chose to follow best practices and designed and implemented a straightforward cooperative inquiry programme. Looking back on the first LSM it was clear that though the participants had engaged, the topic was dry and uninspiring. The second LSM on ethics started to turn a corner with the participants having a greater sense of trust and psychological safety. Gradually over the coming weeks and months my cynicism of cooperative inquiry faded. I recognised that the participants' feedback, reflections and learning were simultaneously validating and integrating the existing literature plus were revealing new insights and so creating and extending knowledge. Without consciously trying or realising, I was doing real cooperative inquiry and the textbook theories were actually working. I slowly became convinced of the veracity of cooperative inquiry when the model ultimately emerged as predicted by thematic analysis literature.

In parallel, I gained a deep respect for the power of cooperative inquiry when I recognised that the participants had grown both personally and professionally. The effects of a group of like-minded people joining up to explore a problem yields multiple benefits beyond just understanding the immediate organisational issues. In this study, the participants realised that the pressures and adjustments they endured were not just theirs alone (or their fault) but common to SIEs. This collective insight profoundly changed their perceptions of being a SIE and hence their lives.

In conclusion, I clearly recollect telling some of my colleagues and wife how amazed I was that cooperative inquiry had delivered as promised and that I was now a convert of postmodern management research methodologies. So, a fundamental element of my academic and professional growth has been recognising the power of cooperative inquiry to contribute to management understanding and societal development.

12 References

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Appendix A Participant Information Brief



You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to carefully read the following information and the attached research discussion topics and questions. Feel free to ask if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, colleagues and managers. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to. Furthermore, this research is not part of my professional duties or my organisational role and is being undertaken for my personal professional development, as part of my studies for a research degree.

Thank you.

Researcher: Michael Nates

Program: Doctor of Business Administration, University of Liverpool, UK

Contact Details: Mobile: +971 50 640 2146 Email: michael@nates.co.uk

Supervisor: Professor Peter Smith Associate Academic, University of Liverpool, UK,

Contact Details: Mobile: : +447874014610 Email peter.smith2@online.liverpool.ac.uk

Research Topic: An investigation into the effects on business decision making arising from the competing commitments encountered by expatriate professionals

What is the purpose of the study?

The idea of this study is that all decision making has issues - however expatriates (defined as a person who lives outside their native country and culture), especially those working in the Middle East, have additional and significant competing professional and personal commitments, and issues than people working in their own country or culture.

To provide some context; consider this: a Middles Eastern expatriate's contract can be terminated due to a break down in relations or loss of confidence or challenging authority and then they have either to find new employment or must leave the country with their family within 30 days of visa cancellation. This is unlike losing one's job in one's home country where there is a support network – this is a serious situation with multiple repercussions. It is thought that this setting leads to an increased climate of concerns of consequence which creates ethical and integrity tensions that in turn could distort and impact organisational and management decision making.

So, my study is based on the premise that expatriates are potentially ethically compromised (consciously and/or unconsciously) due to their competing commitments in light of the consequences of organisational decisions, and that this can have material consequences.

The core objective of the study will be to try to identify markers or flags for when employees and their work contexts are more likely to lead to tensions. Furthermore, it is hoped that the research will pinpoint techniques to help deal with these situations to reduce the tension and make the situation more manageable.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You are a professional expatriate living outside your native country and working in a foreign cultural context for a local organisation.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is totally voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time.

What will happen if I take part?

The research will be undertaken using interactive group meetings (called a learning set) to discuss and debate the challenges of being an expatriate and making decisions. The learning set will be made up of a cross section of 8-10 professional expatriates that will meet six times for 2-3 hours over a 3-3½ month period. Meetings will be fortnightly and will be scheduled at mutually convenient times in [the organisations'] Dubai offices. [The organisations'] management has granted permission for the researcher to undertake this study and to make use of office facilities. Research data will be collected during the discussions.

Expenses and / or payments

Participants will not receive any allowances or monetary payments. The learning set meetings will be held during or just after normal working hours.

Are there any risks in taking part?

The only risks predicted that could arise through your participation are if you find yourself or a colleague in an uncomfortable position due to the nature of the discussion topic or the voluntary sharing of professional insights and experiences. These risks are predicted to be minimal as the research will only include non-confrontational group discussions in a safe and strictly confidential environment. All discussions and research data will be anonymised, and no information or data will be made available to [the organisations'] management team. Furthermore, participants have been chosen to ensure that there is no formal managerial relationship between you and other participants or the researcher and so no potential conflicts of interest should arise.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

By participating in the research, you will gain a deeper understanding of organisational decision making, business ethics, models of the effects of inter-cultural behaviours and patterns, how to recognise and manage professional ethical tensions and learn to reflect on how personal issues could impact onto organisational

decisions. All of this, plus the group interactions, will provide continued professional development of managerial and leadership skills.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

At the start of the first meeting, the “Rules of Engagement” (“Chatham House Rule”) for the group discussions will be established; focusing on strict confidentiality, non-disclosure of information, respect and trust plus the right of withdrawal from the study at any time.

In the unlikely event that any participant has a tough moment or negative reaction to, or in, a group discussion, then the session will be halted, and the participant will be supported and if they wish allowed to leave. The situation and issues will be discussed in confidence with that person to reduce any stress and enable reengagement or supporting the withdrawal from the group and research process.

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting to myself and I will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint that you feel you cannot come to me with then, you should contact the Research Governance Officer at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of my name as the researcher “Michael Nates” and the title of research project of “An investigation into the effects on business decision making arising from the competing commitments encountered by expatriate professionals” and provide them the details of the complaint you wish to make.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

All data will be kept secure and no individual will be identifiable as the data will be anonymised and identities changed.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The intention is to publish the research in one or more academic and professional journals. All participants will be provided with an executive summary of the key findings. All participant data will be anonymised, and it will not be possible to identify any individual within any subsequent publication.

What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

Participation is totally voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time before or during the study program. Should you choose to withdraw then you will need to inform the Researcher so that he can remove you from the study group and destroy all relevant personnel and research data. Please note this can only be done prior to anonymization of your data.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Michael Nates, the Researcher - Mobile +971 50 640 2146, email michael@nates.co.uk,
Professor Peter Smith, the Supervisor - Mobile +44 7874014610, email peter.smith2@online.liverpool.ac.uk
University of Liverpool Ethics Hotline - Phone +1 612 312 1210, email liverpoolethics@ohcampus.com
Phone: +44 151 794 8290, email atethics@liverpool.ac.uk

Appendix B Learning Set Discussion Topics and Planned Questions

Each engagement meeting will be approximately 2-2½ hours and will be held fortnightly

Meeting	Focus	Discussion topics	Discussion Questions	Ongoing Task
One	Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group introductions • Research aims and objectives • Introduction to Action Research and learning sets • Learning Set "Rules of Engagement": Confidentiality; Informed consent; Right to withdraw: Anonymity • Decision making in organisations • Individual and group challenges/conflicts that arise during decision making • Typical/day-to-day decisions made by participants and when is "a decision a decision" • Reflection on relevance of these topics to participants' work contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your understanding of the research objective and how action research using learning sets will support the study? • What are examples of typical decisions made in an organisation and how are these taken? • Which of these decisions are considered and deliberate and which are simple choices? • What is the threshold for a routine task that includes a choice and a decision that requires consideration and thought? • What are the challenges that arise from decision making? • Can these challenges be categorised? • What types of business decisions are taken and made by your role? • Which challenges identified as organisational <u>decision making</u> challenges are relevant to your role? • How are these challenges, in your professional opinion, addressed formally and informally by an organisation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on decision making in your current and past teams/ organisations and how it affects your professionalism and you personally. • Be prepared to share professional insights with the group at the next meeting.

The questions for weeks two to six are broad and indicative as they will ultimately be tailored to suit the emerging discussion which will be dependent on and progress from previous weeks' conversations.

Meeting	Focus	Discussion topics	Discussion Questions	Ongoing Task
Two	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of previous meeting and reflections/insights • Brief introduction to Ethics focusing on the key concepts absolute & relative ethicality, plus corporate and individual ethics • Overview of ethics management systems in organisations – policies, training, monitoring • Ethical challenges/conflicts during decision making • Reflection on relevance of these topics to participants' work contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your thoughts and insights regarding decision making in organisations in response to the last LS discussion? • How do you see these concepts that underpin ethics being relevant to individuals in organisational situations? • Which of the typical ethical management tools have you encountered and how effective where they in supporting ethical behaviour? • How do the ideas of absolute versus relative ethics relate to decision making in organisations? • What ethical dilemmas could you foresee emerging for a professional when making decisions for an organisation? • How have the cultures you've encountered in your professional expatriate experience affected decision making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on ethics and ethical conflicts in your current and past teams/ organisations and how it affects your professionalism and personally. • Be prepared to share professional insights with the group at the next meeting.
Three	Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of previous meeting and reflections/insights • Overview of national cultures - presentation of best practice models and typologies • Review of cultural differences as related to Middle Eastern organisations • Examination of expats as insiders or outsiders in their groups and organisation • Effects of cultural differences on power and authority relationships for individuals and groups • Reflection on relevance of these topics to participants' work contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the last LS discussion, what are your thoughts and insights regarding ethics in organisations and how ethics effects and impacts on decision making in organisations? • Which of the national cultures models best capture your professional experiences as an expat? • Which dimensions or categorisations of national cultures are unexpected? • How can these models be related to professional expatriates working the Middle East? • How does cultural affinity and differences manifest in organisations for expatriates and what are the effects on their sense of belonging and organisational support? • Can an organisation have a single or predominate culture? • What are the effects for professional expatriates of power distance relationships and what factors increase or decrease the effect? • How could cultural originating tensions for expatriates affect organisational decision making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on cultural differences in your current and past teams/ organisations and how it affects your professionalism and you personally. • Be prepared to share professional insights with the group at the next meeting.

Meeting	Focus	Discussion topics	Discussion Questions	Ongoing Task
Four	Tensions for expats during decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of previous meeting and reflections/insights Introduction to self-interest, self-preservation, consequence and perceived organisational support during decision making. Review of conflicts/tensions and consequences for expatriates in organisations and how it affects decision making Reflection on relevance of these topics to participants' work contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to the last LS discussion, what are your thoughts and insights regarding national cultural characteristics and their effects and impacts on professional relationships and decision making in organisations? What influence, in your professional opinion, does self-interest and self-preservation have on the decision making of being an expatriate? Would perceived organisational support moderate these effects? What factors would increase or decrease a professional expatriate's risk aversion or avoidance during decision making? Conflicts/tensions and consequences for expats in organisations and how it affects decision making What characteristics of professional expatriates and organisational circumstances in the Middle East would lead to individuals and teams being or avoiding becoming ethically compromised or challenged during decision making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on decision making as an expat in your current and past teams/ organisations and how it affects your professionalism and personally. Be prepared to share professional insights with the group at the next meeting.
Five	Effective organisational decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of previous meeting and reflections/insights Review of good practices in organisational decision making –that avoid and reduce conflicts and tensions Reflection on relevance of these topics to participants' work contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your thoughts and insights regarding the professional and ethical tensions arising during decision making in organisations in response to the last LS discussion? Which good practices in decision making are best suited/not suited to reduce ethical and cultural conflicts and tensions for professional expatriates? Why? How could these be practically implemented and monitored for their effect on reducing ethical and self-interest conflict during decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on effective decision making as an expat in your current and past teams/ organisations and how it affects your professionalism and you personally Be prepared to share professional insights with the group at the next meeting.

Meeting	Focus	Discussion topics	Discussion Questions	Ongoing Task
Six	Expats and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of previous meeting and reflections/insights • Synthesis of previous topics into overall model of causes and consequences. • Discussion of any ongoing follow-ups if desired or required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the last LS discussion, what are your thoughts and insights regarding the necessity and practicalities of implementing good decision-making practices to reduce and/or avoid ethical conflicts encountered by professional expatriates during decision making in organisations? • Initiation of a deep discussion and critical conversation relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expatriates' ethical and self-interest conflicts due to extreme consequences. ○ Situations or individual characteristics that would increase or decrease vulnerability to ethical and cultural tensions ○ Professional, anonymised, anecdotes and examples of conflicts of interest in decision-making. ○ Methods to increase perceived organisational support and reduce sense of vulnerability. ○ Is this real issue and, if it is, how can it be effectively addressed? • What are your concluding reflections on new insights and knowledge? • How has this supported your professional development and expatriate experience? • What will you do differently in terms of your professional and management practices? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing reflection as the participants work with the practices learnt. These can be shared with the researcher

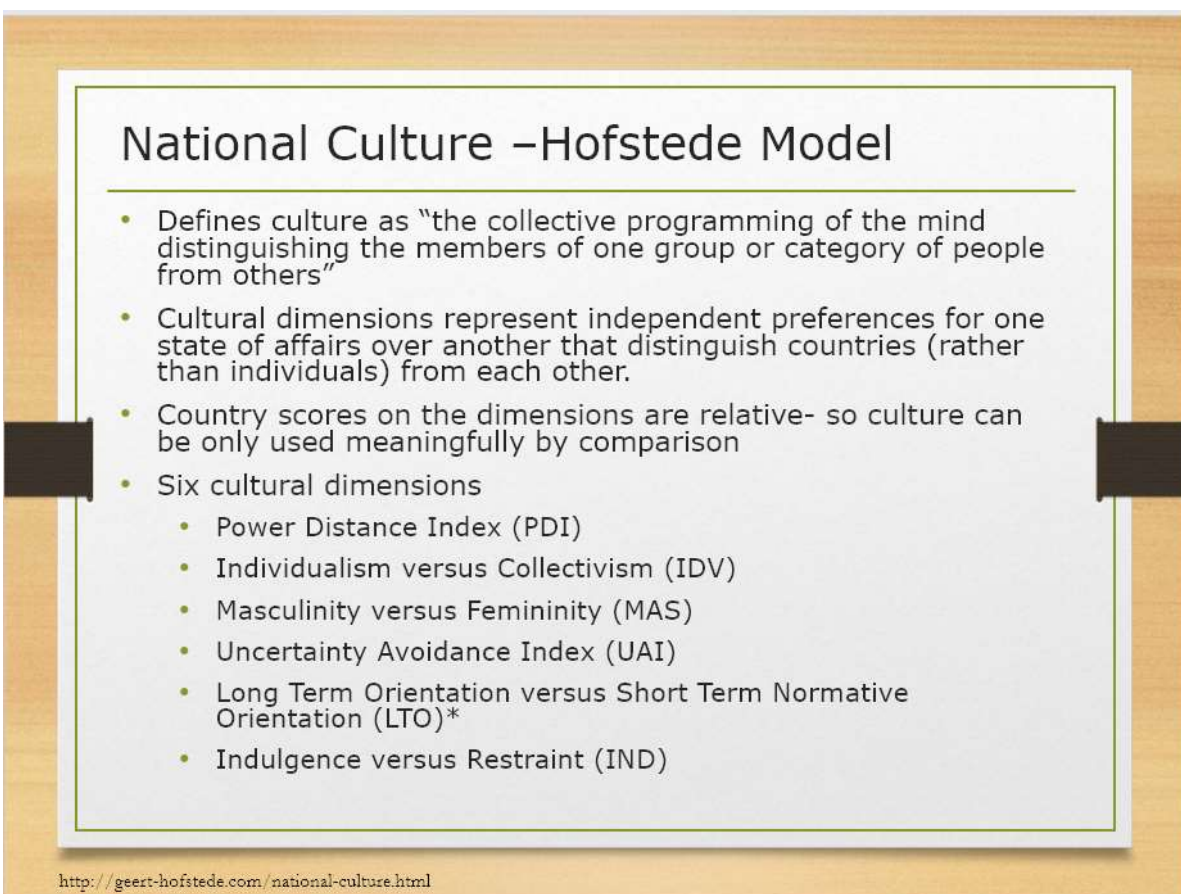
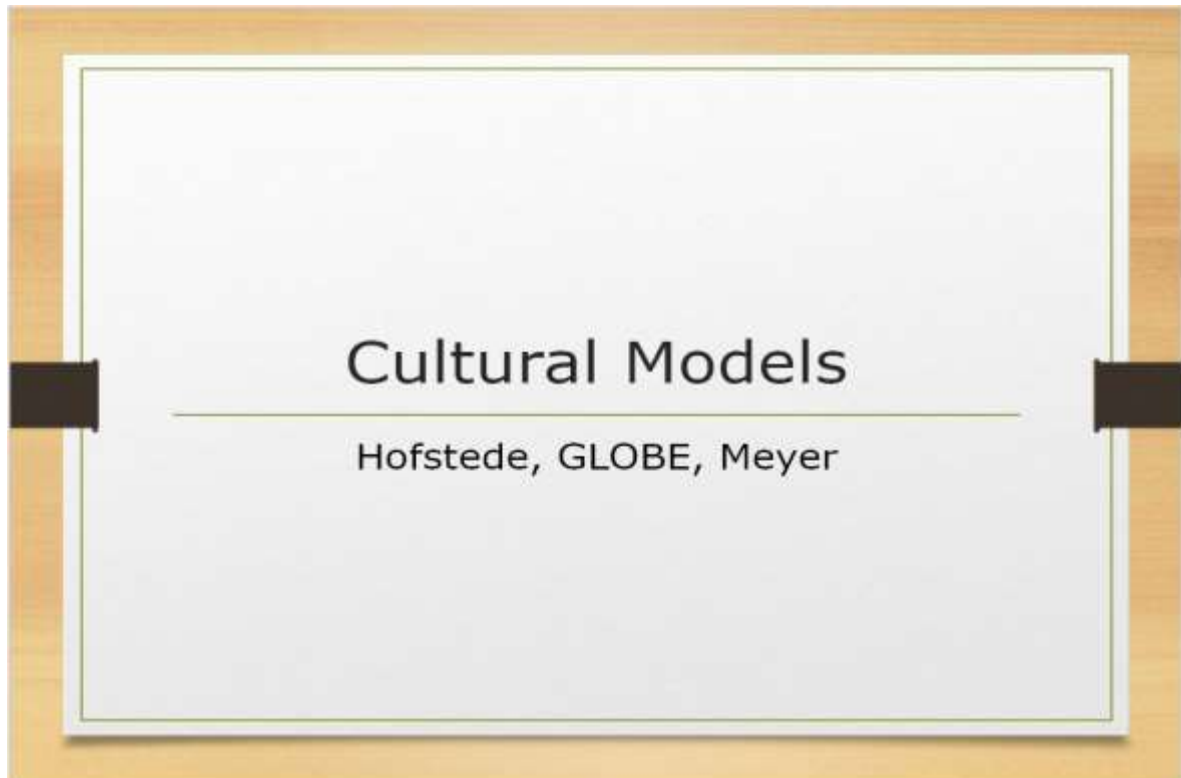
Appendix C Participants' biographical and academic backgrounds

Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F
Gender	F	M	M	F	F	M
Age	40-50	40-50	30-40	3-40	20-30	30-40
Married	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Children #, in Dubai	2/N	1/N	1/Y	0	1/Y	0
Nationality/ies	Indian	British	India	British	Lebanese	British
Permanent residences	KSA, Bahrain, UAE, India	USA Turkey UAE UK	India, UAE	UK, KSA, UAE	Lebanon, UAE	UK, UAE
# years as SIE	19	6	5½	15	3	3
# years in Dubai	3	2	5½	13	3	3
Occupation	Business Development	Engineer	Project Finance	Lawyer	Recruitment	Lawyer
Academic qualifications	B.Eng	B.Eng Hons, Civ Eng, MICE	B.Eng, MBA (Finance)	BA (LLB), Dip Law, NY Board	BA Int. Bus. CIPD	BA LLB, LPC

Participant	G	H	I	J	K	Researcher
Gender	M	M	M	F	F	M
Age	30-40	30-40	30-40	30-40	20-30	>50
Married	Y	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y
Children #, in Dubai	1/N	2/Y	0/N	0	1/Y	2/N
Nationality/ies	Pakistani	Indian	Spanish	Australian	Indian	British/SA
Permanent residences	Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE	India and UAE	SA, Chile, UAE, Spain	Australia, UK, UAE	India, UAE	SA, UK, UAE
# years as SIE	7½	6	7	5	5	12
# years in Dubai	2	6	3	2	5	10
Occupation	Financial Management	Internal Audit & Risk	Engineer	Lawyer	HR	Engineer, CSR, HSE
Academic qualifications	B. Com, M.Com, CA	M. Fin, B. Comp.	MSc Eng	BA (LLB) B. Int. Bus.	MBA	MSc Eng

Appendix D Overview of Cross-Cultural Models

The following slides are an extract from the Learning Set presentation on Cross Cultural models.



<http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

Hofstede Model – 6 dimensions

Power Distance Index (PDI)

- the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally and how a society handles inequalities among people.
- High PD accepts a hierarchical order with no further justification. Low PD has an equalised distribution of power with demands for justification for inequalities of power.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

- High = individualism with loosely-knit social frameworks
- Low = collectivism with a tightly-knit societal frameworks in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.
- A people's self image perceived in terms of "I" or "we."

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)

- Masculinity = preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive.
- Femininity = preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented.
- In the business context - "tough versus tender" cultures.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

- the degree to which society feels uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. Fundamentally - how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen?
- Strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas.
- Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

<http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

Hofstede Model – 6 dimensions

Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO) (added in 1991)

- Every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. Societies prioritize these two existential goals differently.
- Low = preference to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion.
- High = preference for more pragmatic approach, encouraging thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.
- In business context this is related to as "(short term) normative versus (long term) pragmatic" (PRA).

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND) (added in 2010)

- Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun.
- Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms

<http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

Global Leadership & Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research

The GLOBE project investigates how cultural values are related to organizational practices, conceptions of leadership, the economic competitiveness of societies, and the human condition of its members.

9 units of measurement/cultural dimensions

- Power Distance
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Future Orientation
- Performance Orientation
- Humane Orientation
- Institutional Collectivism
- In-Group Collectivism
- Assertiveness
- Gender Egalitarianism

http://www.tlu.ee/~sirvir/IKM/Leadership%20Dimensions/globe_project.html

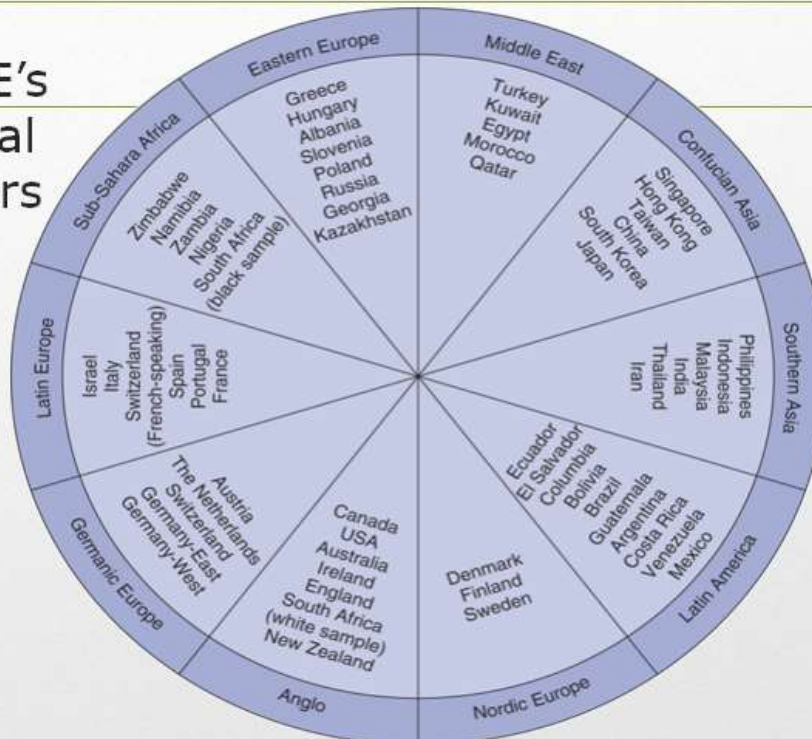
Globe – 9 cultural competencies

(the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies)

- **Performance orientation** - encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.
- **Assertiveness orientation** - assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships.
- **Future orientation** - engaging in future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification.
- **Gender egalitarianism** - minimizes gender role differences and gender discrimination.
- **Humane orientation** - encourage/reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others.
- **Collectivism I: Institutional collectivism** - organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.
- **Collectivism II: In-group collectivism** - individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.
- **Power Distance**
- **Uncertainty Avoidance**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Leadership#Cross-Cultural_Competency_28C3.29

GLOBE's Cultural Clusters



GLOBE – Cultural Dimensions as Clusters

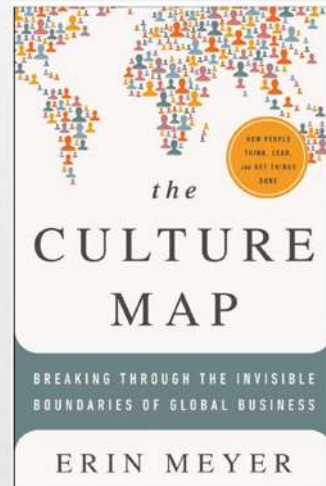
Performance Oriented	Team Oriented	Participative	Humane	Autonomous	Self or Group-Protective
<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Higher</i>
Anglo Germanic Nordic SE Asian L. European L. American	SE Asian Confucian L. American E. European African L. European Nordic Anglo Middle Eastern Germanic	Germanic Anglo Nordic	SE Asian Anglo African Confucian	Germanic E. European Confucian Nordic SE Asian Anglo African Middle Eastern L. European L. American	Middle Eastern Confucian SE Asian L. American E. European
Confucian African E. European		L. European L. American African	Germanic Middle Eastern L. American E. European		African L. European
Middle Eastern		E. European SE Asian Confucian Middle Eastern	L. European Nordic		Anglo Germanic Nordic
<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower</i>
Performance Oriented	Team Oriented	Participative	Humane	Autonomous	Self or Group-Protective

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Leadership#Cross-Cultural_Competency_28C3.29

The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business

- Cultural factors shape and are antecedents for behavior
- Not culture or personality, but culture and personality.
- Default is to view others through your own cultural lens and to judge or misjudge them accordingly.
- Cultural patterns our behavior and beliefs impacts our:
 - perceptions (what we see),
 - cognitions (what we think), and
 - actions (what we do).



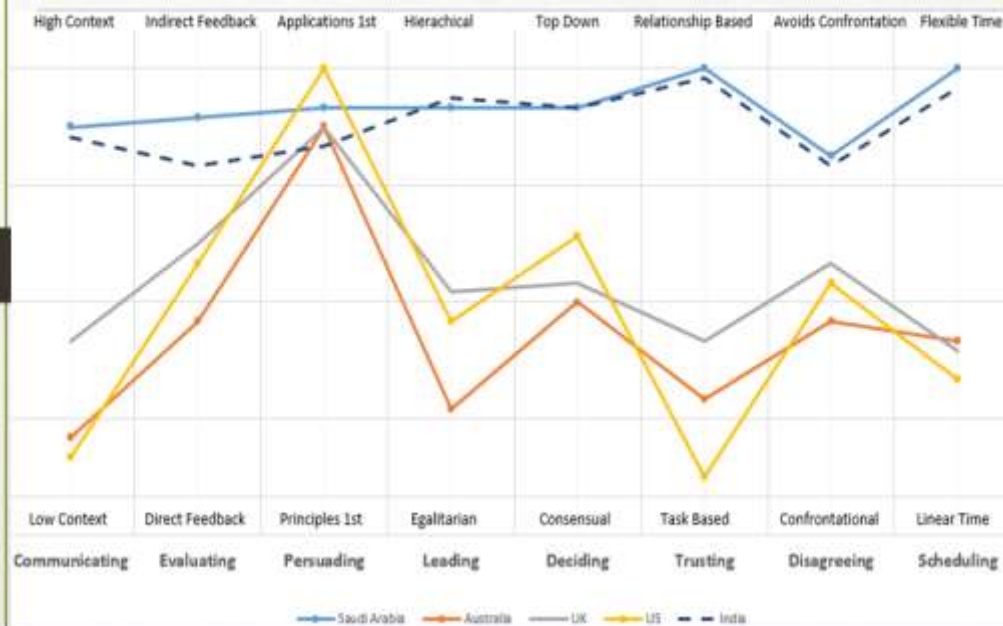
Meyer, Erin (2014-05-27). The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business (p. 13). Public Affairs. Kindle Edition

8 Contextual scales of Cultural Map

1. Leading: egalitarian vs. hierarchical
2. Deciding: consensual vs. top-down
3. Disagreeing: confrontational vs. avoids confrontation
4. Communicating: low vs. high-context
5. Persuading: principles vs. applications-first
6. Trusting: task vs. relationship-based
7. Evaluating: direct vs. indirect negative feedback
8. Scheduling: linear vs. flexible-time

Meyer, Erin (2014-05-27). The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business (p. 13). Public Affairs. Kindle Edition

Meyer's Culture Maps for GCC



Meyer, Erin (2014-05-27). The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business (p. 13). Public Affairs. Kindle Edition.

Aspect	Hofstede	GLOBE	Meyer
Orientation	National	Leadership	Interpersonal
Power	Power Distance	Power Distance	Leading: egalitarian vs. hierarchical Deciding: consensual vs. top-down
		Assertiveness	Disagreeing: confrontational vs. avoids confrontation
Individual and Group interactions	Individualism vs Collectivism	In-Group Collectivism	Trusting: task- vs. relationship-based
		Institutional Collectivism	Communicating: low- vs. high-context
Performance & Reward	Indulgence vs Restraint	Performance Orientation	Trusting: task-vs. relationship-based
			Persuading: principles-vs. applications Evaluating: direct vs. indirect negative feedback
Equality & Justice	Masculinity vs Femininity	Gender Egalitarianism	
		Humane Orientation	
Time and timing	Long vs Short Term Orientation	Future Orientation	Scheduling: linear-time vs. flexible-time
Uncertainty	Uncertainty Avoidance	Uncertainty Avoidance	

Appendix E Raw Data: Transcripts grouped into themes

1. Decision-making and biases

"many decisions are just routine, I pause when they are complicated or challenging and so there is not much reflection when making simple decisions"

"the second time you are making a decision there is a pattern or rote or replication and so I am on autopilot from before - so is this a decision?"

"Most decisions are mundane, the material decisions of few"

"We make decisions based on precedent."

"You make the decision based on experience, which may be faulty [or biased]"

"I treat professional and organisational decisions completely differently to personal decisions"

"As an auditor – it's a simple choice when the evidence is clear cut, more of a decision-making process when the situation is marginal on a material issue. But these marginal calls on material issues typically become public and so are open to scrutiny and hence little room for bias or personal self-interest because of foreseeability of scrutiny. However, the smaller decisions that are seemingly immaterial or below the material threshold and so not open to public scrutiny can (and do in a previous role) lead to self-interest and conflict about whether to in/exclude from an audit."

Power distance and hierarchical power can be overwhelming, and this leads to losing interest [in the decision] because of disempowerment and hence biases creep in. "

"Different teams [that comprise different national cultural personnel], from a cultural perspective, take decisions in different ways and based on different priorities."

"Decision-making depends on the type of decision. I've a quantitative background and that's what I try to head towards. This is the most comfortable way to make decisions. This is rational. But when I can't be quantitative then it's a judgement call. I look to precedents and the context for making these decisions. I try to reconcile opposition issues and I try to step out of the issue."

"I don't see this organisation as a Middle Eastern organisation. There's much more flexibility in my decisions than in other organisations which have layers and procedures. There are pros and cons to this-but we need to have control. This organisational context gives flexibility and agility."

Professional codes of practice

"Lawyers have to think when we make decisions"

"So, as a lawyer I'm ethically bound but as an individual I would be different and so ethics is different between different professions"

"The difference is 'skin in the game' for professionals [working in their profession]"

"As an engineer working in finance, I do not have that professional constraint"

"A non-professional [without ethics training] is more likely to engage in unethical behaviour"

"I looked at my [professional] ethics code and I now recognise that I need to review it more often-to avoid sleep walking. And to take it more seriously"

2. Ethical Awareness and Training

"There is a lack of ethical training that leads to a false sense of entitlement which in turn leads to the propensity and predisposition or opportunity for unethical behaviour."

"Ethics in business is a massive issue - even bigger than culture"

"People don't view doing wrong things as wrong"

"I noticed an increased awareness of differences in ethical perceptions between different professional disciplines".

"So, someone behaving unethically from their own perspective may not be judged as unethical, but from other view this is perhaps an unethical mistake."

"So, though there is intentionality about the act, there can be discussion about the understanding of the ethical issues and when cross-cultural judgement on ethics are made then perhaps unethical actions can be recast as unethical mistakes"

3. Role, Situational, Group and Organisational Ethics

"As lawyers, ethics is often a challenge especially when a team has a different view on ethics [to that of the lawyers]. Ethics is team-based"

"But as a [national] from [a local regional background] working in Dubai I need to raise my standards and behave like a British or German." [this statement has been anonymised]

"They [people from other teams] don't understand that what they are saying is wrong and should not even be said. But from their perspective it's fine. In Europe, they'd be prosecuted for saying that."

"Conflicts can arise due to differences between ethics of an organisation and the external ethics of the market/context. So, an organisation can be self-assessing themselves as ethical as compared to the external environment/competitors who they see as ethical. The organisational corporate response aims to balance the requirements of ethical and being competitive/profits. So, no organisation aims to be as ethical as possible within the realm of business success."

"One needs to first consider what I would do in my own country and then think/reflect on what I do in/need to do in the UAE."

"decision-making is not absolutely ethical because people are human and therefore this differs across cultures. In addition, ethics are also dependent on where one is in their life, where they are living and the context - so ethics is dependent on your role and situation".

"It's interesting that teams operate notably differently based on, or due to, the cultural make up."

"Some organisations in the UAE are naive about how they are actually working from a local context into an international perspective".

"in HR, we do question ethics and reflect on ethical behaviour. We consider whether a person realises that their behaviour is ethical-i.e. situational appraisal by trying to understand from HR's perspective the thoughts of individual. In this way, human resource personnel are implicitly understanding that ethicality is situational and relative."

4. Ethical leadership

"Ethical thinking flows down in an organisation i.e. from the top and the leadership. Each brings their own views on what is right, and it is moved down to the organisation."

"What the boss sees as ethical becomes the organisational code of behaviour"

"Ethics at an operational level is a reflection of the senior management view."

"Influence of surroundings can lead you to accept, or force you, into implementing an idea [that is unethical]."

"In the multicultural multi-layered organisations like those in Dubai we do as we told until it goes wrong then there is finger-pointing"

"tone at the top is very important. If the senior does it then it is a gate for me. So, an expat boss plus an expat subordinate is a potentially dangerous relationship that could lead to unethical behaviour"

"To survive one must follow the leader's ethical stance. Follow the leader. The one who is leading defines the ethical behaviour and culture."

"A group's ethics is strongly influenced by and an outcome of the leader of the group's charisma and power."

"Unethical leaders/managers and lack of trust in reporting lines [leads to insecurity]"

"impact of corporate culture-the emphasis led by organisations/ companies on ethics also affects how SIEs can make decisions"

"Surrounding context and environment (the place you work and generally acceptable practices)"

"Use of unethical behaviour to join the crowd and avoid any criticism is driver"

"Leadership behaviour that influence people to be within their favoured group "

"So important is the managerial support and style. How the company sets standards for managers to follow and on-board team members"

5. Adjustment of Ethical standards

"But even people working in their professions when they step off the plane [and become a SIE] they behave differently and relax"

"[Ethical] Relativity is used far too often to justify behaviour - even when one knows what is absolutely right"

"[The consequence of] multicultural environments is not raising ethics to the best behaviours or standards but instead descending to the lower standards. The lowest common denominator, the lowest absolute ethical or is that just the lowest relative ethics?"

"[Ethics is a] Race to the bottom"

"Expats are challenged [passively coerced may be more closer to the intent of the word challenge] to be unethical i.e. act unethical to preserve themselves and often choose to keep silent when they know unethical activities are occurring."

"This discussion [about ethics] reflects the challenge of remaining ethical within a high-power distance relationship and under peer pressure."

"When people are in a group, they change their morals to collective and typically downwards. We shift to their view. Will become morally numb."

"Ethics is (also) predicated on the rule of law, but unfortunately the rule of law does not/is not systematically applied in the Middle East, so this leads to ethical differences in behaviour."

"job insecurity does/can lead to exhaustion and "why care" [via moral disengagement] so leads to reduction in ethicality."

"I constantly think I'm going to get fired, several times over the past six months - and this leads to an increase in stress and fatigue but as I've got a professional code, I don't change my behaviour"

"outside of a [legal] profession, people do get so tired and fatigued that they go along and give in"

"Ethics, to some extent, is also functional relative to the cultural background. In a multicultural environment, what may seem an ethical to some may not be so for others. This opens the door for possibilities where a SIE makes a decision which can be viewed as unethical by others"

6. Awareness of Cross-cultural models and theories

"I'm surprised that this [national culture] can be categorised"

"a lot of stuff we do requires an answer which is [high content] even if the direction [the context] is oblique"

"legal opinions received from local firms are different to international legal opinions. Locally there is low content and high context, while for international lawyers there is much more content and less reliance on context. So, there is often a requirement for the local legal opinion to be interpreted for the answer/meaning to be understood [as it has low content]."

"As a Brit, I noticed that my teammates from Australia and South Africa use their natural higher content approach of project managing lawyers because they are explicit and directive. For them it is implicit in relying on codes and precedents which is more my way."

"Maybe the approach to data by someone is a reflection of their culture's certainty /uncertainty and acceptance/avoidance tendency"

"Most people don't have this info as [formal] training. There is just an intuitive adaption and learning, often by error, rather than a formal appreciation"

"You should give this presentation to all new joiners. If I'd had it, I'd have had an easier time."

7. Cross cultural Management and Decision-making

"Consensus and decision-making across cultures is hard because of the different ways of deciding, persuading et cetera"

"Striving for excellence is different across cultures, for example in Saudi Arabia they do not strive for excellence but rather they strive to improve their relationships as these are more important than tangible delivery of excellence."

"the challenge about being here [in Dubai] is the contrast between the apparent modernity with the lack of transparency."

"[there are many] corridor agreements in relationship cultures".

"tone at the top is very important. If the senior does it then it is a gate for me. So, an expat boss plus an expat subordinate is a potentially dangerous relationship that could lead to unethical behaviour"

"To survive one must follow the leader's ethical stance. Follow the leader. The one who is leading defines the ethical behaviour and culture."

"A group's ethics is strongly influenced by and an outcome of the leader of the group's charisma and power."

Power distance and hierarchical power can be overwhelming, and this leads to losing interest [in the decision] because of disempowerment and hence biases creep in. "

"Different teams [that comprise different national cultural personnel], from a cultural perspective, take decisions in different ways and based on different priorities."

"Cultural differences in moral behaviours and practices this leads to moral disengagement and acceptance of lowering of standards."

"for women in the Middle East this is a huge issue-when I meet a new contract or supplier, they seem to say to themselves -yes a woman we can dominate. They then get rather surprised by my behaviour."

"Expats lower their gender behaviour [with respect to sexual discrimination and lewdness] to the local standards because they think they can get away with it"

8. Ethical behaviour in cultural contexts

"Bridging ethical differences is almost impossible as the backgrounds are entrenched."

"In a multicultural environment, there is a degradation and decrease in one's [original] cultural affinity and responsibility and so people can behave unethically and unteam like - people become mercenary."

"Multicultural seems to bring up the worst of each culture"

"So, people from tight cultural backgrounds where families and groups are important, find deliberately unethical behaviour hard to handle and so will trust less."

"Culture plus family values leads to ethics"

"They [expatriates] are more native than the natives"

"Expats behave as individuals but become mercenary in a group."

"Expats often exaggerates their own interpretation/perspective of the local's unethical behaviour to justify their own subsequent unacceptable behaviour."

"So, the lack of structures and the [low] likelihood of the consequences emboldens the expats who then behave unethically."

"Is bribery an absolute issue or are they just hiding behind ethical relativity. I think it is corrupt."

Even if it is socially accepted, that does not mean it is right, but it can't be challenged because of power distance and hierarchy issues."

"Often they would delegate the responsibility for managing the process that has ethical challenges and hence avoid direct accountability".

"The key issue is the actual consequences of [unethical] actions in the magnitude and consequence and if they have backup plans. "

"During a recruitment interview, the participant, asked potential candidates to describe how they would handle the situation of knowing that their boss was acting unethically. The participant and the potential candidate all came from relationship-based cultures with high-powered distance. The participant noted that none of the candidates would go against the boss and challenge hierarchy, even though they knew he was acting flagrantly unethically. The better candidates said that they would go to an independent third party to help resolve the situation - for example they would go to an independent arbitrator and raise the issue with them for them to then take up the issue with the business and the boss in an indirect manner."

"Whistleblowing in Arab cultures is unethical. Whistleblowing would go against the family and all your group. So, in a relationship-based society it would be inappropriate to blow the whistle on somebody. The idea would be rather to find a way to work it out than to go to the authorities."

"don't air dirty laundry in public, sorted out in-house, save face"

"face-saving externally causes friction internally, but with an organisation that has accountability internally this leads to finger-pointing and dirty laundry in the external environment which leads to fiction in the public domain [which is unacceptable in a relationship-based culture]."

"Trend to act ethical on decisions and problems need to be solved quickly which will more likely lead to act unethically "

"Pressure from leadership positions (related/unrelated) "

"Importance of hierarchy and bureaucracy"

"Expectations of the company"

"I Increasingly noticed and became aware of cultural differences in work contexts. For example, some cultures can't say no so instead they say yes but then don't deliver. The question is, are they lying always or is it just culturally unacceptable to say no?"

"Some cultures, for example the Chinese, are very hierarchical and this is reflected in decision-making. The outcome is that employees at an operational/site level are disempowered and are unable to be effective which leads to challenges for project management."

"I've noticed differences in ethics is very different across regions especially with respect to organisational decision-making. For example, what happens during in a board meeting (explicit and public domain) is not the same as what happens after the meeting (implicit and based on networks). The important decisions are taken outside (before or after) board meetings rather than debated in the board meetings."

"I now realise that cross-cultural does affect behaviours."

"As an expat from day one, you are aware of differences in cultures and so one needs to relax your expectations. Inflexible expatriates don't survive as an expatriate. Expatriates must adjust to being sensitive to multicultural environments. If a SIE doesn't adapt to the cross-cultural context then his stress will increase. As a SIE adapts to life in a multicultural context, so the tensions and stresses due to the differences will reduce."

"Operating in a cross-cultural context is a continual learning process"

9. SIE motivations

"expats come here for excitement"

"As an expat, I know I'm not here on a permanent basis, it's always at the back of my mind. So, to decide to invest in myself or my organisation is real. Is my fiduciary duty to myself or to the organization?"

"We are always in these discussions only citing the negative and not the positive contribution [of SIEs]. Is this because of the temporary nature of expats and then they are gone - less long-term incentivize"

"It's hard to reconcile the incongruence between my person and organisation as an expat, which would be different if I was back home. So, I put my personal career before the organisation".

"Some SIEs may be here to make a quick buck. In such instances, possibility of an ethical decision-making arises "

"Expats are in the UAE because they earn more here than back home."

"Motivation for becoming a SIE and your country of origin and social values [affects your behaviour]"

"Short termism and cashing in is the goal of the SIEs, so they are behaving in a self-interested way"

"Insecurity itself and short-term nature of lack of permanence"

"I know that one consultant friend has given up-major international consultant global top 10. His boss was just too tough to stop. His boss was to the morning on his workload performance and a matter how hard he tried. He could not succeed in his management eyes stop his boss was also protecting his [own] position"

10. SIE adjustment

"I do as the locals do"

"The longer I'm here I just accept the ways and do it. When I first joined, I was more aware."

"I have adjusted my style of working by looking at the person I'm working with. It becomes natural. I constantly readjust"

"There is a clear-cut difference between Saudi Arabia and Emirates, and we readjust our way of working individually with them."

"In an expat community there is also a blend of cultures and hence even in the expat context there is

"Cross-cultural behaviour/adjustment contributes to biased decision making"

"Culture shock that expats experience when they first moved to this region, cross-cultural perspectives and miscommunications across cultures require adjustment"

"The local culture that expects a person to surrender to after living here for years"

"people may jump around [as they adjust] – back on forth, the process is not linear"

"What I don't see here is that you may not complete the cycle, so you can get stuck and go backwards and forwards within the first two or three phases-without actually ever getting to a stable sense of adjustment and comfort".

"I remember the shock as a [foreign national of English-speaking descent] when moving to the UK though I thought we were so similar. So, imagine the cultural difference when I moved to the UAE."

"The way I was on boarded [induction] it was so bad that after six weeks I would have gone if I was not tough"

"Behaviourally he has gone native, to fit in to survive, he now can't [easily] repatriate."

"Without family support, they [expats] become slightly feral."

"[I] can't go back to my own country, so [I] just accept all sorts of things and integrate into the organization."

"This is very helpful as [now I know] everyone feels the same".

"From the learning sets I now realise that I am not the only one who has these worries and concerns-paying all the rent up front, maybe losing your job and concern that your salary will be paid. I took home the picture that you showed in the last meeting [SIEs adjustment cycle] and shared it with my husband to show him that we are all feeling the same - white skin or brown skin. The picture made it much easier for us as we now understand that being an expat feels same for everybody and we are not in it alone. The learning set discussions have really changed my views as I did not know that other people had the same feelings and thoughts - I thought I was alone."

"Liabilities around you and commitment to the family are a factor "

"Lack of support network is that family not near so feeling of isolation and friends are itinerant and so hard to establish roots with the outcome being ready and security"

"missing family, friends and advisers [is a challenge to remaining ethical]"

11. Perceived Organisational Support and Leader-Follower Relationships

"People who come here as first-time SIEs, many expect a red carpet, but organisations are not always so accommodating all. They might not experience the expected leadership style [that they would be familiar with from their previous role]"

"I think the manager has huge, huge, huge responsibility for new joiners. I'd stay if my manager is good, and leave if he is not. It's a psychological contract that is being developed with most managers not being aware of this."

"It's a sink or swim experience and approach [for SIEs] in most UAE companies"

"Of course, POS is very important for SIEs- one needs to know this is a big commitment for a SIE, as there is a reduction in the network and social support. So organisational POS is very important when the new joiner arrives. New joiners, which includes SIEs, have preconceived ideas about the organisation based on the HR team's behaviour during the recruitment phase which is typically positive and accommodating as they are aware of the importance of POS during the recruitment and on-boarding phase. Then the SIE arrives and there is a huge and significant difference between the HR team's approach and their line managers behaviour. This leads to a drop in POS and a negative perception of the organisation. This low POS at the start of work leads to directly jumping to culture shock (and so skipping the honeymoon phase)."

"Interestingly in this country, one gets sent a job offer letter [while you are still in your home country] but not the company's employment terms and conditions - these come later when you've already landed and it's too late to change your mind."

"POS is related to trust. When there is low POS then people are concerned about confidentiality and how ethically marginal issues will be dealt with."

"The organisational support needs to be there based on effort and not just outcome/results. This is important as it plays into your decision-making, if POS/policy and decision-making is inconsistent, then people can feel unsupported and take shortcuts to just get to a result."

"So, if there is some more focus on effort then there will be an increase in POS [and hence more ethical behaviour]"

"once one has accepted the reality [of a SIE in Dubai] this leads to Stockholm Syndrome. {this very powerful statement was greeted by general consent and irony}."

"there is increased pressure of doing the (un)ethical thing [when POS is low] especially when the decision/action is skirting on the fringes of one's personal and/or professional codes."

"So, linking POS to decision making, if an organisation is behind you, then you feel more confident to behave as would be expected - ethically [the participant implied with their body language that this is less likely to be unethical]."

"Even if I do as I'm told to do and it subsequently goes wrong, then you are blamed by the hierarchy."

"Even if I write a cover my arse email and put it on record to defuse my responsibility it doesn't work because if they [the management] tell you to do it then they will ignore the email [at a later date]"

12. UAE legal framework

"SIEs are dependent on job for right to live in the UAE"

"No citizenship [is ever possible]"

"Labour laws and culture what is supportable -this leads to security"

"Less knowledge on legal/laws that govern [expatriates leads to insecurity]"

"lack of employee rights and legal protection [is a contributing factor]"

"Newly arrived SIEs in the UAE typically pay one year's rent upfront in full, so they are deeply financially tied in to making their job successful. We then hit rock bottom but can't leave."

"Dubai is a huge pressure cooker because if you lose your job you are kicked out"

"In addition, lease agreements in the UAE do not have break clauses and say somebody's fired the increased consequences is that they might end up having to still forfeit up to a year's lease which creates additional stress to retain one's job and employment."

"From the UAE perspective, your employment and residence is all dependent on your organisation. Though law has provisions, in reality it is not enforced. So, the UAE context has and leads to an increased vulnerability."

13. Job Insecurity

"Job insecurity is related to the potential to finding a new job"

"In times of economic depression, SIEs do not want to repatriate and so will do everything they can to stay in their jobs by becoming more self-interested and self-protective. We do not want to leave our expatriate roles as there is less opportunity and work back home."

"plus, there is so much talent in the UAE [if on losses one's job]"

"Job insecurity is related to self-efficacy and self-esteem - so if one has reduced responsibilities in country, then they can just leave and find new work elsewhere"

"They are only relevant if one accepts that if one loses a job, then the consequences are negative."

"Job insecurity is just one of the factors [leading to immoral behaviour] rather there are other ambitions and motivations leading to unethical behaviour. For example, unethical behaviour is also due to cross-cultural differences in perceptions of ethics."

"POS is job security"

"job insecurity is a key piece [in the formation of POS and ethicality]"

"Behaviour as an expat is proportional to your dependents [wife and children]"

"Job insecurity is one of, but not the main reason for moral disengagement and self-interest."

"job insecurity is a big issue and most of my colleagues also say this is true. "

"Cultural differences in moral behaviours and practices as this leads to miscommunication-feeling of secrecy and therefore insecurity"

"impact of job insecurity on ethical decision-making-some SIEs may believe they have a lot to lose by being an ethical and their decision making. This guides their decision-making"

"Lack of or difficulty in finding substitute job in the same region"

"Fear of losing the job"

14. Moral Disengagement

"Moral disengagement is universal and not just unique to SIEs. All people should behave morally."

"as lawyers none of us do that [referring to unethical behaviour and moral disengagement] as we have commitments to the courts and our professional code. We have challenges with others being morally disengaged as they are unaware of morality. I've seen all of these [moral disengagement] mechanisms being used [to rationalise immoral decisions]."

"If leaders and people at the top of an organisation are morally disengaged, then they push this down to their followers."

"If you can justify it to yourself then it's fine [to behave immorally], but it's a real challenge across and between departments."

"Often they would delegate the responsibility for managing the process that has ethical challenges and hence avoid direct accountability"

"If an organisation does not have solid codes of ethics and a very clear understanding of them, then this leads to interpretation [of what is ethical] and the space for moral disengagement to occur."

"Short termism views [of SIEs] rather than long-term views lets and leads to moral disengagement happening."

"Expatriates say that if it gets so bad, then I'll just get on a flight and leave-and this has happened previously, I've seen it and heard about it."

"Very low job insecurity and high embeddedness leads to reduction the ethics. But as a SIE who does not care I can always leave".

"the plan [to be a SIE] leads to diminished sense of responsibility for actions -> moral/ethical disengagement"

"Moral disengagement also manifests as part of cross-cultural interactions"

"Ethical policies in decision-making processes should be made explicit."

"Not all individuals end up at unethical behaviour, some people stand up for the ethics and/but have the stress that they have to go through."

"I express my concerns - but if or when the decision is taken by someone else, then I'd effectively act on the decision even though my ethics are not in agreement."

"There is the difference of real-life and theoretical life. The reality is, if you want to do business in a place then you must accept the local ethics. But that does not permit you to cross lines but only to bend them - adapting to local conditions."

"I have a line in the sand, but if it [the ethicality of the decision] is inside the line, but outside my own moral code, then I do it. I did because I'm concerned for job security. I can accept it if it's a decision made by someone else."

"From a moral disengagement perspective - letting or making others make the unethical decision is in the grey zone it is "okay" and fine as I want to keep my job."

"I don't like it, but I rationalise it as I made my thoughts known and they made the decision."

A. Participants' Reflections on the SIESIM

"a person can fit into [i.e. identify with] many boxes."

"it is a combination of the sum of perceived organisational support + differences in ethics + UAE context + cross-cultural dynamics which will lead generally to a sense of life insecurity which is wider and not just in the organisation."

"I don't think one can do anything about the ethical (flow process) - people always go to the bottom of ethics"

"do we really believe that we can stop people ending up in the box on the right? The model explains how the process could flow. The elements will interact much more than shown in the static model."

"Getting to/arriving at decision-making with selfish interest is very dependent on the individual's sense of vulnerability and self-perceptions with regard to ethics and culture"

"The differences in cross-cultures here are very different which leads to a sense of secrecy et cetera. So, this leads to a sense of a general insecurity and moral disengagement which together lead to job insecurity."

"As a lawyer, I can't let my ethics shift and end up in moral disengagement, so I end up in the bottom square in the antecedents for moral disengagement [containing low POS, job insecurity, etc.]. Because I don't drop my standards I'm perceived as being difficult and this leads me to every week being concerned that I'm going to be sacked and having job insecurity due to low POS. So, for me the model does explain some of my challenges."

"You've pretty much mapped my first eight months here - but please add a dotted line [pointing to the arrows leading to moral disengagement] for people with professional codes of conduct - as I did not go over the moral disengagement line"

"I think the model is excellent and brilliant. It is what we (implicitly) discuss day in and day out"

"Good model to have - but no model can explain everything."

"I agree greatly with the model, but once again for lawyers I don't think it would apply."

"I think the consequences [of being a SIE] are spot-on"

"I identify with all of that - seeing it so clearly laid out makes it obvious"

"it's a wonderful tool, . . . really"

B. Participants' reflections on their changes and actionable learnings relating to decision making and ethicality resulting from their participation in the CI program

"it is true, SIEs do adjust and adapt their decision-making processes"

"My decision-making processes have changed but not my ethicality. I try not to get contaminated by the culture of Dubai. It takes an effort and so I try to travel back to my country often."

"I want to put a different spin on the question, as we assume, we've all come from a place of high standards and ethics. So, what if a person in the organisation has very high ethics? How will the model play out? Say yes, the decision-making process does evolve because one gets fatigued. Watching my colleagues and also getting tired of arguments so I will need to expend extra efforts to maintain my ethics. Therefore, I conclude that decision-making does evolve over time."

Yes, as one gets to know the organisation and as fatigue sets in, my decision-making over time has led me to places I don't feel comfortable in. But over time I tire, give me a day off- so that I can avoid just doing what they want. If I was a newbie, I'd have dug my heels in."

"I understand how an organisation makes decisions, but this leads to personal tensions and burdens. "One tries to do the right thing - however if someone chooses differently - then this is their decision"

"I know someone who went through the adjustment process and now do what management says. They lost their will to live, they went from happy to miserable. They said to me 'it makes my life easier. I don't care anymore'"

"the adaption is related to individual's national culture with some being more flexible and others not."

"As part of HR, we've seen it. On the first day, a person arrives, and they are happy and excited. But after six months they come back and say 'what am I into? This is the biggest mistake I've made!' If they can afford to leave the job and repatriate (typically western SIEs) then they will not stay in the shit. If they can't afford to leave due to economic and employment constraints, then they adapt and change their standards and stay."

To close the research loop, the participants were asked to reconsider whether self-interest in SIEs is a significant problem for Dubai based organisations - i.e. the original research question.

"I absolutely, yes, agree with the problem statement and see it as a problem."

"It is 100% the problem that needs to be addressed."

"It's a problem that is more likely as a consequence of the specific contexts."

"The fundamental issue is not just a SIE, it's the same way I was working before. If the decision was unpopular then I'd have the same issues. But the magnitude of the consequences are larger for SIEs and hence they may make a difference [in their biases in decision-making]."

"I think a key point has been overlooked. One has the same issue back home but as a SIE the [UAE] labour/legal residential laws, cross and multicultural barriers all lead to fatigue and exhausting trying to deal with all that shit and then trying to still come to an ethical decision. The organisation is supportive, but we need our managers to support us, it becomes too much and so we give up."

"I agree with you and agree with the problem statement - the final element being a loss for the employer - even though the employer is also a contributing factor. So, there is a vicious cycle that is interacting between employer and employee."

"It is a problem for organisations' decisions, as if they [the decisions] are not influenced then decisions would/could be much better for the organisations."

"Looking at the model I see that most of the boxes are organisational to SIE interactions and so, reflecting on this, this is an organisational problem, and is started by the organisation maintained and sustained by the organisation but they are unaware of it."

"incredibly useful model to have for when people arrive and to structure an information session to make them aware and so not to be alarmed later on"

"It doesn't serve the organisation or the country you're in. You're selling it short, it's mercenary. It's just not enabling long term sustainability."

"Yeah, a huge problem, it goes to the heart of safety and working culture - like a self-fulfilling prophecy and a vicious cycle."

"This is the problem for the organisation because decisions are not best for the organisation. Implicitly the decisions by SIEs only take into account their expected tenure and any long-term consequences beyond their stay are not their problem. They externalise the problems for the organisation to encounter."

"Yes, it is valid because as you come here [to Dubai as a SIE] so I'm here for money and temporary. You see and encounter cross-cultural ethics in organisations. You either fit into [and implicitly adapt/accept] this context or we leave and go home. In addition, during the probation period people are even more watchful and cautious"

"Fucking hell, just tell people what the goddam [ethical] policy is! Then people will understand. Rather than having/needing people to figure it out as they go along from those around them."

"consult with organisations to implement policies and procedures that cover decision-making."

It's a very big issue. Of course, it is unspoken, unthought of, it all kept very discreet. It's embedded - It's so common from people in a similar culture that decision-making is definitely influenced. It's a challenge that first you need to be aware of it and then we have to overcome it."

"This is a behavioural trait that we should be aware of, it's inevitable. If it's left unchecked and unnoticed and it is a problem. If we recognise it as a problem, then it can be managed and turned into a positive."

"It's a problem because most organisations don't know it's a problem which is weird because most leaders were once SIEs and young themselves."

"It's very concerning that no one has done anything about this issue before and to rectified it at a corporate level." "Now I know that it's not just your culture that goes through this [expatriate adjustment cycles], but as a SIE, we would all go through the same cycle."

"I used to think that as an Indian SIE I had unique challenges, but from the learning sets I saw cultures had similar challenges and so this enabled improved connections and understanding. When everyone opens up, it allowed me to count my blessings. Plus, I shared my thoughts with my friends & family - especially the SIE adjustment cycle."

"Though the other participants were from different cultures and nations it was amazing to hear them saying exactly what I was about to say and on my mind. At least by knowing that the other people have the same thought and issues, this gave me support in my own situation."

"Following these learning sets and understanding the situation is universal, I now find my job is even harder because I consciously know/see/perceive how people are behaving with self-interest."

"I've unconsciously previously felt and thought about these issues. It was delighted to get together and talking in a group is very useful for me to get to see and understand first-hand other people's views."

"Having a forum was cathartic and helped intellectualise and analyse what we've been through. Plus, it gave space for reflection"

"I was able to do my own look back and do my own reflection of each session. I reviewed how my colleagues fitted into the theory presented [during that session] and it has given me a deeper understanding of my role in the organisation-this was very practical."

"This was very beneficial to us from HR as it made explicit what we knew and thought privately."

"I was sceptical at the start, but the best part was how it all pieced together and gave me a model to understand my situation."

"The cross-cultural aspects have sensitised me that memos and messages need to be read in context."

"Very good understanding of how different cultures fit into multicultural environment of Dubai."

"During the sessions I was able to be aware of different cultures in the learning set and get to see them in action."

"Been very good to get to know colleagues from other teams and build rapport."

"During the cross-cultural discussion, the penny dropped, and I realised if only I'd been told that within my first few weeks of arriving then it would have been so much easier. It was quite reassuring that I was not alone. "

C. Transcripts of Peer Reviews

"The fear of loss aversion cuts across all cultures, all ages and all income brackets-it is universal. Fear of loss is a first automatic reaction at a preconscious level. As people become more educated then they are more able to hide the fear of loss aversion and so they become more cunning and better at denying the impacts of loss aversion."

"organisational justice is not universal in the UAE-it's not the same rules for everyone."

"SIEs arrive with their own cultural and moral compasses, a lot of which are universal. How do you appeal to that and keep it, in a corporate reality that is clashing [with their own ethics]. It's not as simple as saying 'you know what is wrong', because it is so easy to say in a corporate 'what's in this for me' and act accordingly. I see that people's behaviour is adjusted in fundamental ways due to self-preservation based on fear of loss."

"this resonates with me as numbness and being, punch drunk."

"absolutely. You've identified a problem, you've proposed solutions, now you can build a program to commercialise it and to activate moral compasses, etc."

"if you dumb this down, it could even be presented to government institutions. Their aim would be to discuss with them how we are engaging on how we [the residents of Dubai] are all pulling to make the UAE sustainable."

"I absolutely think it's a problem and will be a problem of varying scales proportional to the international scale and size of the organisation. Why is this so, because in the digital age of immediacy, now, now, now-things need to be done quickly and with local power dynamics and aversion to risk and uncertainty, it is a fertile breeding ground for unethical behaviour to emerge. So, in addition/because of this, people are also taking decisions in their self-interest, rather than in the organisation's long-term interests and needs. This is a problem for organisations because part of being a sustainable organisation for me, is creating the space for people to be creative in the long-term interest of the organisation. So, by implication SIEs short termism is not aligned with the organisation's sustainability."

"Can I substitute millennials for SIE? As they come into an organisation with a degree and see a job with us as a step on the career ladder-rather than the start of a long-term career with a particular entity. Millennials are disloyal, all they want is the salary."

"how many people land in Dubai and only last 6 to 12 months in their first job due to adjustment and cross-cultural challenges. That was me. I now only recruit people with more experience of being an expatriate."

"Some people do adjust -assimilate, adjust and change their morals and ethicality. By way of example, my husband has morphed into a local on the road."

"Expats legitimise being rude." which is an example of the manifestation of moral disengagement

"ethics is a race to the bottom. I see that particularly occurring about termination of people. I see managers acting unethically."

"I'm not completely sold with the self-interest factors leading to biased decision-making. Yes, they are present, but that's not the total picture. But yes, the pattern is valid in the Middle East."

"Yes, and I think that it's valid - a key factor is around the Labour law and getting over culture shock so as to create a great life for you and your family. But when this [great life] is threatened by things at work then I want to protect it. Plus thinking that I may be able to get away with it and I see other people behaving like that in the organisation. So, I think it [the model] is valid."

"When you add the restrictions of labour law, you see these things happen here . . . "

"I had the UAE bubble and was trying to reconcile my circle of concern with the circle of influence. I now behave and align to the ecosystem in order to stay - do a deal with the devil."

"every three months I re-question why am here. We are all aware of what's going on. What to do? We as SIEs seem to be able to look over our ethical compass."

"It leads to increased turnover of personnel and the spending of money on the wrong things."

"An unfortunate outcome is that there is no progression from an organisational perspective - a lack of maturing and growth. Nothing changes because of a lack of ownership of the problem."

"Looking at the model, you can go as far as fraud being a problem."

"I don't know why we care less here. I suggest to colleagues that they care less in order to help adjust and survive and make it work. Is this correct? I think with respect to Maslow [hierarchy of needs] we stay on the bottom two rungs. The third run, a sense of belonging is not present here [in the UAE], so how do we progress to the peak of self-actualization."